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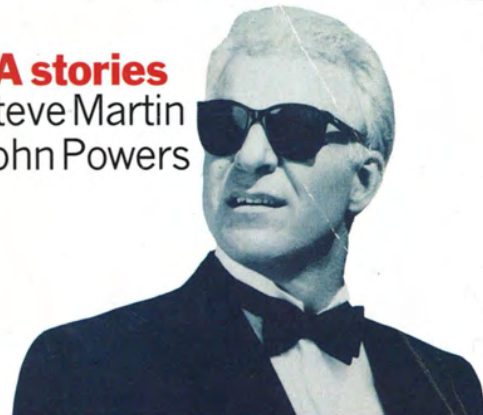
Sight and Sound

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inside

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The Silence
of the Lambs:**
the serial
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LA stories
Steve Martin
John Powers



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Sight and Sound



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a hard land**

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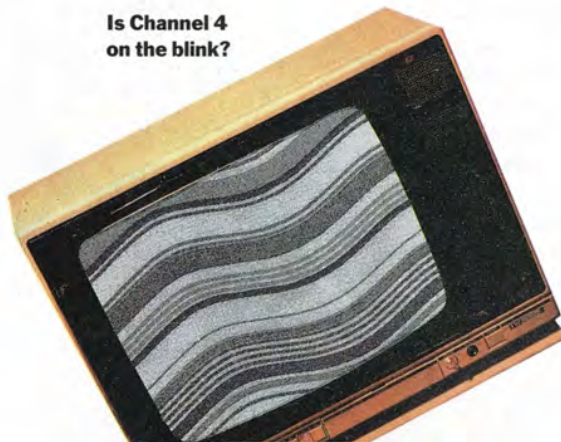
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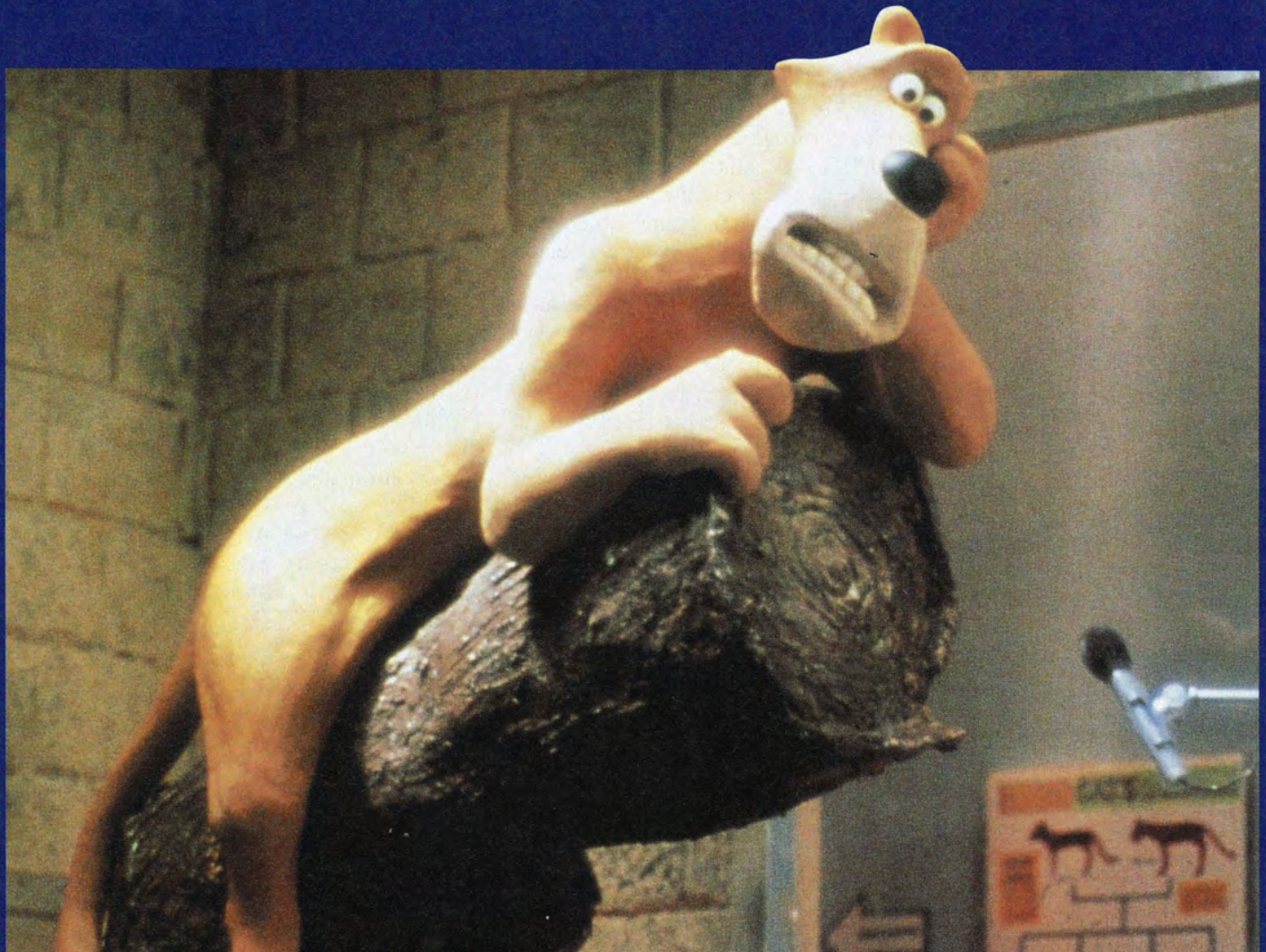
**Is Channel 4
on the blink?**



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No turning back

What film is playing at a cinema inside you? asks Jeanette Winterson in this issue. You know what she means. Films now matter to so many of us, not least corporate businesses. Nike, the King of Sole, recently commissioned ten film-makers, including David Cronenberg, to make adverts in their own distinctive style for the new AIR 180 trainers; they are playing at a cinema near you.

The 180s are not the only smart movers. Nike's signature is crucial to the success of the company and it is fascinating that it wants to associate itself with film-makers who have similar high-profile signatures. The company's admen must be aware that screens of all sorts are the prime pleasure of its customers: from cinemas where attendances have been rising again, through television and video, to the newer kinds of screens offering to the viewer participation in 'artificial worlds'.

Within such a culture, one so sympathetic to screens, in which cinema matters to a number of generations, it ought to be possible to launch and sustain a sharp, thoughtful magazine which makes cinema central to general cultural debates.

Yet if cinema can become again the focus of such debates, there will be very little overlap with the last time cinema mattered – the 60s, a period which is again high fashion. Certainly films then had high status, yet for all the radical ambition of certain film-makers, cinema had at that time rather traditional imperial ambitions. It was bidding to become the ruler of the cultural world as the natural successor to Literature and the Fine Arts. Now, in a post-modern world suspicious of cultural authority, cinema has to recognise that it can claim only distinctiveness, not superiority –

and must acknowledge its intimacy with the other arts, and with other technologies.

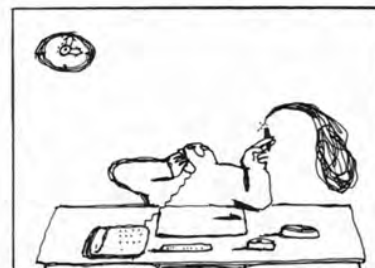
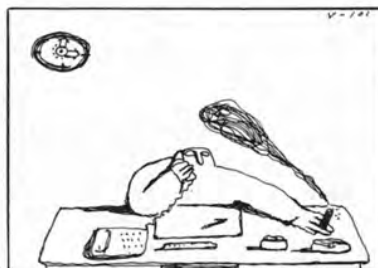
This shouldn't be a problem in Britain where cinema has always been a wonderful mongrel, claiming inheritance from a variety of sources. There's Ken Loach, Verity Lambert and Philip Saville from television; Hanif Kureishi and Mike Figgis, of *The People's Show* from the theatre; Black Audio Film Collective from black politics; and numerous people from the arts schools, including Derek Jarman, Isaac Julien (*Young Soul Rebels*) and Philip Ridley (*The Krays* and *The Reflecting Skin*). What 'British' cinema would be like without the arts schools is difficult to imagine – and yet neither the film industry nor film critics with their narrow concerns have been very vocal about what has happened to the schools in the last few years.

This magazine does not want to reduce the heterogeneity here (or in any other country) to the idea of a single national cinema culture; nor to construct a single European film culture against the might of Hollywood. If European cinema is to matter again it must be by forging new identities rather than recovering a single old one, sustaining film cultures rather than Film Culture.

Sight and Sound, then, has no interest in nostalgia for the good old things; it wants to start from the bad new things. It is committed not to Cinema but to the extraordinary range of existing and potential cinema cultures, in Britain and elsewhere; to cinema cultures resounding with the noise of the world; to cinema cultures, above all, where films are argued over, made, seen, argued over again, and enjoyed.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Sillavan - Lydon ©



Jerry, when you're in Cannes, get the low-down on something over there called '1992'. Find out who the hell's in it, what's the damn budget, how do we get ourselves a piece, and Jerry, for Pete's sake can we change the title...

Contributors to this issue

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An American in Paris

When Euro Disneyland opens in spring next year at Marne-la-Vallée, 15 miles east of Paris, Mickey Mouse will be arriving 'in person' on the continent which Christopher Columbus departed exactly five hundred years earlier. The New World ambassador with the ears will be importing to the Old World another kind of utopia: an America filtered through the cinematic screen. As one company brochure puts it, "A Disney Theme Park can be described as a three-dimensional motion picture which the audience actually lives." A pure fiction brought to life by Disney "Imagineers", the fourth colony of Planet Disney will be more real than reel.

Weaned on generations of animation classics, every year "guests" in their millions pour through the turnstiles at Anaheim, California – a pilgrimage to Disneyland has been regarded as an American birthright since the granddaddy of theme parks opened in 1955. And these days Walt Disney World in Florida features like some latterday Xanadu on airline route-maps, while the parking lot for the Magic Kingdom could swallow its west-coast precursor and still leave spaces to spare. With a Far East beachhead established at Tokyo Disneyland, Mickey now bids for Napoleonic glory.

Designed to conjure images from 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' and other films, the Espace Euro Disneyland (right) opened in December 1990 to whet appetites for the theme park and associated facilities on the 4,800 acre site. A mere 11 million people are expected to visit Euro Disneyland in its first year, helping to consolidate the theme parks as the Walt Disney Company's most lucrative division, ahead of both film and television, and consumer goods. The brand image is already well

known through various media, from Mickey-emblazoned merchandise to French children's television show, *Le Disney Channel*. But on top of that, Euro Disneyland stands to gain from a convoluted process of cultural double-exposure.

Many of the characters brought to life at Le Magic Kingdom will have passed from the pages of European folklore to the big screen of American film iconography and back again. Touching down outside Paris as costumed "cast members", their presence lends notional authenticity to key theme-park settings like Cinderella's Castle and Alice in Wonderland's Maze. The likes of Lewis Carroll, A. A. Milne and the Brothers Grimm might be amused to find their fictional creations re-exported to their continent of origin, this time as stars of a three-dimensional fantasy world. Meanwhile, outside the theme park proper, six new hotels will initially provide over 5,000 rooms in buildings themed on American genre locations, such as the Western frontier town and New York City. Manhattan, remade once as a working film set in Florida (a backlot at the Disney-MGM Studios theme park) becomes a fully-fledged faux-cityscape in France.

And Paris can look forward to its own version of Tinsel Town. By 1996, a second 'gated attraction' will have been added at Euro Disneyland: the Disney-MGM Studios Europe, based on the third and most recent 'gate' at Orlando. For film buffs and philosophers of the hyperreal alike, this will be a true paradise, constituting a third-order simulation: a French reproduction of the Florida reconstruction of an imaginary Hollywood of the 30s. Will they be Singing in the Rain, or wringing their hands on the Seine?





A world apart

The hottest footage to emerge from the film capital this year was shot by an amateur video enthusiast. Seeing police car lights flashing outside his apartment, he decided to test how well his new camera worked at night. The answer? Well enough to land his work on every news broadcast in America: the tape showed four white LA policemen repeatedly clubbing Rodney King, a black traffic offender (he'd been speeding) after they'd already stunned him with a 50,000-volt Taser dart. Eleven other white policemen stood by and watched the beating.

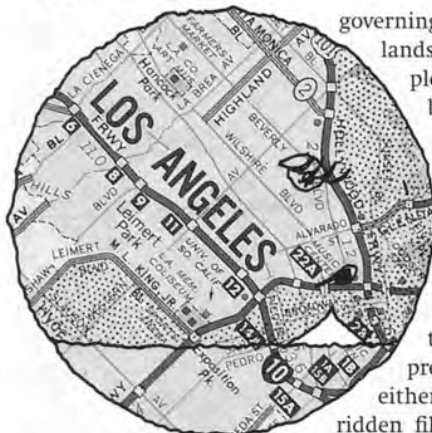
Three days later in Westwood, a one-time village that's become a prosperous shopping enclave near the UCLA campus, a riot broke out near a cinema showing *New Jack City*, a delirious, anti-crack Blaxploitation film. For reasons that remain obscure, the cinema oversold tickets to the late show, then turned away hundreds of people, mostly black, who had driven miles from their neighbourhoods to see the film. Enraged, they began breaking windows and looting.

Nodding sombrely, experts concluded that the riot wasn't about the movie – it had been fuelled by blacks' rage at the King beating. This didn't slow the hysteria of Westwood's white business leaders, who talked of banning black-oriented films from area cinemas. "This happens every time they show a black film", groused the owner of one fancy eatery. "We're not talking Sidney Poitier here".

Unlike London or New York, where different ethnic groups rub shoulders willy-nilly, Los Angeles is divided into segregated neighbourhoods. White Angelenos – and especially the movie industry's prosperous subculture – live far from the black and latino communities; they are separated by miles of freeway, decades of history. Though informal, the racial dividing lines are enforced. When a black man drives a Mercedes through Beverly Hills, Bel Air or even the middle-class Mid-Wilshire district, it's not uncommon that he'll be stopped by police demanding proof that he owns the car.

Sun and noir

You can see how such mental geography infiltrates the industry in two popular recent movies about Los Angeles: Steve Martin's blithe comedy, *LA Story*, and Stephen Frears' sardonic thriller, *The Grifters*. Together they exemplify what Mike Davis in his fine book *City of Quartz* has called this area's two



A film sparks a riot, a book gives indigestion at lunch – signs of the segregated life of LA, says John Powers

governing myths: LA as the landscape of sun-drenched pleasure and LA as the birthplace of noir. But what these very different movies share is the same set of blinkers. Though people of colour make up more than half of LA's population, you'll be hard-pressed to find a face in either of these myth-ridden films that isn't Anglo.

Put simply, while Hollywood promotes the amusing myths of sunshine and noir, those of us who live here must deal with the unamusing realities of white and black.

Even as cops tortured an injured man and a Warner Bros picture sparked a riot, all my industry friends were obsessed by a book about the industry itself. (If Hollywood had a flag, it would be a mirror.) *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again* is the tell-all autobiography of Julia Phillips, who made her name co-producing *The Sting*, *Taxi Driver* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, then achieved notoriety by losing her career up her nose. Phillips' title alludes to the ritual dining engagement at which movie deals are made. When the book first came out it seemed to be another case of life chasing art: Phillips was barred from her coveted table at Morton's – long the centre of the Hollywood universe – when patrons more powerful than she complained about her presence.

Norma II

Like most low-minded people, I snapped up the book hoping for real dirt from an insider who'd risked it all. It's a mistake I'll chalk up to experience, but let me save you the £12 by giving away Phillips' great revelation: the emperor is still naked. Producers are still greedy, directors still egomaniacal, Hollywood still money mad. Phillips clearly quit doing cocaine only because she was broke, and her book is striking only for its tedious parade of druggie episodes and occasional unflattering glimpses of the famous. Steven Spielberg is described as "megalomaniacal". Mogul David Geffen has a middle-aged baby face puffed up with collagen. *Top Gun* producer Don Simpson enjoys "turning women over and fucking them in the ass".

Phillips feigns concern over the ill-treatment of women in Hollywood,

but she's too canny to be serious. Had she analysed the industry's sexism, drug abuse and gay-bashing agents and execs (many gay themselves), there wouldn't have been angry queues at LA bookstores.

Instead, the book is pitched at the level of the world it describes – one part petulant rant, one part confessions of a coke-addled Candida surrounded by male sharks. (Everyone in Hollywood feels entitled to think of themselves as a victim.) Conventional wisdom has it that the book is a 'suicide note' for Phillips' career. But that's nonsense. It's just the latest remake of *Sunset Boulevard*, with Phillips fancying herself a 90s Norma Desmond – she's still big, it's the cocaine that's gotten weaker. Unlike Norma, though, Julia may actually pull off her comeback. For the first time in years, her name provokes more than a bewildered yawn. Can eating lunch be far behind?

Dumbos

A while back, a big-shot movie producer told me I ought to write a script: "Everything I get", he said, shaking his head, "is just so terribly written". I wasn't flattered, nor should I have been. He wasn't trying to butter me up, let alone asking for a screenplay. He was simply making a move in the Hollywood game, "It's Not My Fault That The Movies Are Stupid". The poor guy just wanted me to know he's literate.

The intellectual pretensions of Hollywood have been a source of hilarity since the days when Hecht, Fitzgerald and Faulkner first came West. But as the movies grow dumber, people here are increasingly obsessed with proving they aren't dim. Judd Nelson tells interviewers that he buys an armful of books every week. Upping the ante, Richard Dreyfuss lets it out that his fantasy is to own a bookstore. Of course, none of the real players would ever come out and say they are reading a book (not even the one they are reading, Julia Phillips'). That would be to admit that they aren't real players. Superstars, producers, studio bosses – they know that reading is something you pay minions to do.

Of course, titans like Sylvester Stallone and Kevin Costner – or, as I like to call him, Dances – have even stopped wasting their time with all this confusing book-stuff. To make themselves appear brainy, they simply wear designer-framed glasses with thin, non-prescription lenses. Specs worked for Joyce and Einstein. Why not Rocky?

Out of order

For the first few months of 1991, New York seemed caught in a time warp. There were war protests in the streets, day-glo buckskin and neo-60s minis in boutique windows, and – thanks to Oliver Stone's deliriously reverential \$40 million bio-pic – the fallen-angel face of The Doors' Jim Morrison scowling out from the covers of *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire* and *The Village Voice*.

The Doors proved an instant referendum on the 60s, as well as on Morrison and Oliver Stone. The film received violently mixed notices, sometimes even in the same paper. The weekly *New York Observer* followed Rex Reed's tantrum ("The Doors is just about everything I loathe in a motion picture... a 2½ hour assault on the senses") with Andrew Sarris' announced preference for "Stone's blustery bravado" over "Kevin Costner's pseudosensitivity".

Despite maximum hype and impressive early grosses, Stone is unlikely to approach Costner's success. As I write, *The Doors* has already been up-ended by the release of *New Jack City* – Mario Van Peebles' updated *Public Enemy* – which suffered the notoriety of a fatal shootout at one Brooklyn cinema during its opening weekend. Enjoyably bombastic as *The Doors* can be, it bellows in a monotone. Even Stone's best films, *Salvador* and *Talk Radio*, have been fiercely overwrought. But in *The Doors* he dons his party hat and refuses to take it off.

Still, as Sarris' coupling suggests, *Dances With Wolves* and *The Doors* do make oddly complementary national epics. If the former recuperates one historical nightmare while the latter revels in another, both are set in heavily mythologised periods and both commercialise countercultural fantasies concerning the mutation of a militarised white protagonist into a nouveau Native American.

Much of *Dances With Wolves* suggests a delayed and denatured hippie pipe-dream. The semiotics of Costner's transformation from soldier to Sioux make one of the film's more compelling spectacles – a bit of tentative cross-dressing, the gradual shedding of facial hair, the subtle appearance of accessory beads. This is going native in style. *The Doors*, meanwhile, takes considerable pains to demonstrate Jim Morrison's supposed Indian affinities. In western terms, Morrison is a virtual Geronimo who terrorises the nation before drinking himself to death.

As the self-proclaimed Lizard King, Morrison invented an image imper-



A shirtless Geronimo, Jim Morrison is a nouveau Native American in Oliver Stone's latest national epic, argues J. Hoberman

fectly cloned by successive generations of shirtless, lederhosen-clad cock rockers. As a sociological phenomenon, he remains fascinating mainly because – far more than his peers Jimi, Bob and Janis – he was an eruption of the Middle American id, an emblem of the nation's capacity to go totally nuts.

Francis Coppola intuited this when he ignited *The Doors*' revival by using 'The End' to open *Apocalypse Now*; Brian De Palma seconded the motion with his deployment of 'Hello – I Love You' in *Casualties of War*. It didn't matter back then whether you knew that Morrison's father was a rear admiral in the US Navy; the guy's hatred of authority was as naked as his chest.

Hollywood's most celebrated Vietnam veteran, Stone too has made the transformation from uptight bluecoat to savage redskin. Indeed, when it comes to the 60s, Oliver seems resolved that everybody must get Stoned. (His next project is the Kennedy assassination.) If nothing else, Stone has managed to green the flyboy antagonists of *Top Gun* by turning first Tom Cruise and now Val Kilmer into drooling hippies.

The Doors isn't exactly *The Glenn Miller Story* except that, in a certain sense, that's exactly what it is – the putative saga of a generation, awash with the music of its martyred protagonist. Although Stone's mythomania creates a misleading sense of Morrison as the only show in town rather than one more act in an ongoing circus, the movie's greatest flaw is a stupendous absence of irony.

It's not just that Stone regularly indulges in effects as tacky as the LSD sequences in Roger Corman's *The Trip*; his literalism actively punishes the imagination. Where Morrison is concerned, Stone never met a metaphor he didn't want to cast in bronze and bounce off your skull. He cuts to a close-up of a lizard as young Morrison

hitchhikes to LA, breaks into a performance of 'The End' with inserts of the killer's feet walking up the hall, overdubs Morrison's trial for public lewdness with 'When the Music's Over'.

The Doors certainly wanted to be taken seriously – their early interviews exhibit a level of pretension unthinkable today – and Stone is more than willing to oblige. Cosmic from the start, *The Doors* opens with a portentous overture scored to 'Riders on the Storm'. The camera rushes over the edge of a New Mexico mesa to capture Morrison's childhood memory of driving past an automobile wreck ("There's a killer on the road") involving a car full of Indians, then vaults fifteen years into the future to adore Kilmer's twenty-one-year-old Morrison as he wanders lonely as a cloud through the youthful pulchritude of Venice Beach.

The least of *The Doors*' problems, Kilmer has a pleasingly new-minted look and a blankly 'inward' quality accentuated by earnestly concentrating his eyes on the *chakra* between his flat nose and feline mouth. Although fundamentally humourless (something the man who wrote 'Hello – I Love You' could not have been), he convincingly portrays Morrison's obnoxious charm and bloats out admirably for the cautionary finale.

Here, as with Cruise, Stone gets a strong turn by putting his star under make-or-break duress: the stage performances are *The Doors*' most compelling scenes. The movie's set piece, naturally, is the notorious March 1969 concert in Miami during which Morrison not only dropped acid but supposedly his leather drawers as well. Miami represents the inevitable Vietnamisation of the movie – its *Apocalypse Now*. Stone orchestrates the event like a nocturnal firefight – the auditorium lit by stroboscopic flares, the singer pelted with joints, the audience consumed by superimposed flames.

As fans swan-dive out of the balcony and naked girls pirouette from their seats on to the stage (alongside the obligatory Indian shaman who materialises whenever the poet ingests LSD), Morrison swings his microphone like a bolo, mimes fellatio and rather than sing 'Light My Fire', taunts the audience, ultimately leaving the stage to lead a lysergic conga line while singing 'Break on Through'.

It may sound ridiculous, but it's hard to watch without a chill. There are intimations of disorder here that even *New Jack City* can't supply.

Terminators

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times. In terms of gross receipts, Hollywood's prospects have never been better. In 1989, largely as a result of the extraordinary performance of *Batman*, Hollywood broke the \$5 billion barrier, with box-office receipts of \$5.03 billion. In 1990, lacking *Batman* or a *Batman* equivalent and following a disastrous Christmas, grosses still hit \$5.02 million thanks to a wave of hits like *Home Alone*, *Ghost*, *Pretty Woman* and *Dances With Wolves*.

Moreover, the good times appear to be continuing into 1991. With *Home Alone* still performing well (it looks like it will shortly outdo *Batman*) and the spectacular addition of *The Silence of the Lambs*, plus help from *Sleeping with the Enemy*, this February set a new record in grosses for the period. The box office for the first two months of the year was up 20 per cent from last year, with ticket sales up 14 per cent.

The remainder of the year looks good too, with many high-profile potential blockbusters promised for the summer. These include Disney's version of E. L. Doctorow's *Billy Bathgate*, starring Dustin Hoffman; Tri-Star's Bruce Willis vehicle, *Hudson Hawke*; Paramount's *Naked Gun 2½* from the Zucker Brothers; Fox's surfing detectives Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves in *Point Break*; Universal's 'Young Tommy-Guns' (*Mobsters*); and Warner's Kevin Costner film, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. And then there's Christmas, with its promise of Warren Beatty and Barry Levinson's *Bugsy* from Tri-Star, which also stars Annette Bening (from *The Grifters*).

Nevertheless, there is a down side (and not just in quality). Although grosses were down only a hair last year, cinema admissions fell by 7 per cent. More seriously, costs have been rising almost as much as profits. International action stars like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone can command as much as \$10 million plus 15 per cent of the gross (*Total Recall*) or even \$20 million (*Rocky V*). But of course actors' salaries have always led the inflationary spiral.

What has changed now is that executives, directors and even lowly screenwriters are following suit. Executive salaries first started to go through the roof when Sony lured Peter Guber and Jon Peters with an unprecedented base salary of \$2.75 million a year each for five years, initiating an executive scramble for higher pay. And now James Cameron is

After the money-mad days of the 80s, the new Hollywood maxim is curb the costs or die, reports Peter Biskind

rumoured to be getting \$6 million for directing *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*.

Press fodder for months has been the phenomenal sums paid by studios in the frenzied bidding wars for spec scripts for projects such as *Radio Flyer*, *The Last Boy Scout*, or Joe Eszterhas' *Basic Instinct* (\$3 million). The result is that the price of doing business, fuelled by huge increases in marketing costs, has rocketed. The reason last summer was not as profitable as it should have been was not only the surfeit of action films, but that the \$60 million plus budgets of movies like *Days of Thunder* and *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* greatly reduced their profitability.

An average budget today runs to \$40 million, with prints and advertising adding another \$20 million at least. *Dick Tracy* cost approximately \$35 million to make, but Disney spent a staggering \$55 million to promote and distribute it, so that it had to make almost \$100 million to break even. Paramount, which had the lion's share of last year's big-budget flops, faced a \$7.3 million loss last quarter despite having the year's second most profitable film (*Ghost*).

The runaway costs of today's movies have many Hollywood executives worried, among them Jeffrey Katzenberg, chairman of Walt Disney Studios. Katzenberg has a well-deserved reputation for astuteness. He and Disney company chairman Michael Eisner take the credit for resurrecting the moribund studio they took over in 1984 and catapulting it to the top of the Hollywood heap.

In February, Katzenberg circulated a lengthy memo to his staff which was leaked to the press, creating an extraordinary stir. In the memo, Katzenberg condemned the "tidal wave of runaway costs and mindless competition". Alluding to the recession, he wrote that "we are entering a period of great danger and even greater uncertainty". Despite Disney's first place market share, its "bottom-line" movie profits were "the lowest in three years".

Comparing Hollywood executives to lemmings racing into the sea of competitive overspending, Katzenberg singled out the "blockbuster mentality", "home-run thinking" and "star-driven packages" as the main offenders. He argued that there is no such thing as a guaranteed revenue floor for 'event' movies, pointing to star-laden flops like *Havana* and *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Finally, he called for Disney to return to its reliance on high-concept

'idea' movies and the tight-fisted policies for which it has been notorious. Katzenberg has subsequently followed the example set by Warners and Paramount (which announced plans for budget cuts of an average of 25 per cent) in limiting in-house production budgets and entering into distribution agreements with big spenders like Andrew Vajna's Cinergi.

The question, of course, is whether costs will come down. According to a source at one of the talent agencies, the need to save money has led to a run on first-time directors. "My sense is that there is a desire to cut costs, but people on a day-to-day basis don't really know how to address it", says producer David Puttnam, whose Enigma Productions has a deal with Warners.

A good test case is Eszterhas' spec script *Original Sin*, which was bought by Cinergi in mid-March. It was cited as an example of the new cost consciousness because it had been on the market for a month and fetched a paltry \$1.55 million, half the price of *Basic Instinct*. Predicts Puttnam, "It's only a matter of time before Sony and Matsushita start talking to each other, saying, 'This is not a serious business', bringing the studio heads to the table by taking matters out of their hands".

Meanwhile, the Hollywood cash-squeeze is taking its toll on the independents and weaker studios too. Despite the unprecedented success of *Dances With Wolves* and *The Silence of the Lambs*, Orion is on the ropes after thirteen years in the business. Always known as an auteur studio which gave unprecedented control to talent, Orion has had a series of expensive flops, and ended the year in the red.

Orion is currently trying to sell off its most promising forthcoming pictures, with *The Addams Family* going to Paramount. If Orion goes down, Columbia - which owns foreign and home video rights to fifty forthcoming Orion films - stands to benefit. It could pick up Orion's assets for a song.

MGM/UA was a victim of the financial gamesmanship of the high-rolling 80s. By late March it was so far behind in its payments to creditors that the courts were asked to declare the studio in involuntary bankruptcy.

The French bank Credit Lyonnais has emerged as a key factor in the fate of both studios. Should Orion and MGM fold, the number of majors will be reduced to five, creating an unprecedented concentration of power in the industry.

Shorts circuit

If you despair at the state of short-film exhibition in the UK, then a trip to the well-established short-film festival at Clermont-Ferrand is a tonic. Once a year, the local population of a town best known for its production of Michelin tyres packs two auditoria for seven days, cheering, booing and applauding a sizeable programme of new French and international product, retrospectives, seminars and debates.

Large audiences don't guarantee good films, of course, and the eleven programmes of new French material tested the endurance of even the committed viewer. Too many productions were lavishly made, intelligently directed and technically impressive, but lacking a central idea to give them substance. The Paris-based Agence du Court Métrage estimates that more than 400 short films are made each year in France, many funded by the impressive state and regional subsidy structures. On this showing, however, there are questions to be asked about the relationship of subsidy to quality.

There were highlights, of course: Jean-Paul Husson's *Valentino I Love You*, a glorious pastiche of those 50s black and white movies in which hero and heroine hurtle down a winding mountain road; Pascaline Simar's *Interruption Volontaire*, a striking study of a woman's experience in an abortion clinic; and Jean-Marie Maddeddu's *Canadair*, a witty piece in which a father gives his son nightmares by reading him to sleep. The Grand Prix for the national section deservedly went to Nicolas Errera's *Aller à Dieppe sans voir la mer*, a sharply comic essay about a born loser's attempt to complete the journey from Paris to Dieppe.

These four films all display an understanding of the limitations and

Short films get short shrift in Britain compared to France, as Michael Rose discovers from his visit to Clermont-Ferrand

challenges of the short form; they work because they are relatively simple ideas precisely and economically conveyed. They are not intended as sketches for longer projects, and they are made with an audience in mind.

Highlights of the international section included Erik de Goederen's *Phenix* (Holland), a deft mix of fantasy and comedy in which a young boy hiding in a tree-house fends off the manic attempts of his parents to get him down; Jim Garrard's *Touch My Lips* (Canada), a lively film about an Elvis impersonator whose flagging career unexpectedly revives when Elvis' body is stolen from Graceland; and Fane Flaws' *Rodney and Juliet* (New Zealand), an exuberant attempt to film "the most pathetic love story ever told". The Grand Prix went to Steven Okazaki's *Days of Waiting* (US), a documentary about the internment of America's Japanese population in 1942.

Britain was a strong presence at the festival, both in the international programme, dominated by Aleksandra Lech's brilliant parable on capitalism and greed, *Meat*, and in the British Council's five-part retrospective of recent UK production. The impressive line-up included the fruits of the three production schemes which have ensured the survival of high-profile, live-action short films in the UK (the BFI's 'New Directors', Channel 4/British Screen's 'Eleven Minute' programme, and the Arts Council/Channel 4's 'Eleventh Hour'), together with the cream of the National Film and Television School and Royal College of Art.

UK output certainly compares favourably with that of other European countries. However, in Britain live-action short films are still regarded merely as a stepping-stone to a career

in features and television. With funding scarce, most schemes are aimed at giving new talent a chance, discouraging established film-makers from developing short projects.

The heart of the problem lies in getting work shown in the UK. The commercial circuit has all but given up showing short films, seeing them as reducing the number of possible feature programmes, and so detracting from valuable confectionery sales. This is typically short-sighted - indeed, screening a punchy ten-minute movie before the trailers and ads could encourage spectators to sit through the whole performance rather than turn up at the start of the main feature. The Channel 4/British Screen 'Eleven Minute' project was set up to produce 35mm films which could be shown in the circuit cinemas.

Specialist audiences fare better. The record of the BFI's Distribution Division in encouraging more short films to be shown in regional film theatres is laudable. The Arts Council runs a similar scheme to promote artists' film and video. Channel 4 and BBC2 have supported short-film production over the past ten years, but shorts are still considered high risk by TV schedulers, and the films' unpredictable lengths make regular slots impossible.

There have been attempts to overcome this problem: BBC2 produced the '10 x 10' series precisely to fill the ten minutes before Newsnight, and Channel 4 commissioned 'The Dazzling Image' to enable two or more films to be presented in packaged programmes. Clearly, more short films won't be seen in Britain until exhibitors are less cautious. Meanwhile, Clermont-Ferrand offers a gratifying glimpse of what might be.



Festivals brief

● **37th Oberhausen International Short Film Festival** (24-30 April 1991) includes a strong TV and video component, with a special programme from worldwide TV organisations and a seminar on the influence of video clips and advertising films on features. The emphasis is on the rich diversity of independent short film-making, from computer animation to documentaries.

● **7th Hamburg No Budget Short Film Festival** (16-20 May 1991) will feature a seminar on

the current state of the European short film and an 'Irish Evening', as well as the theme-oriented competition for 'Three-Minute Quickies' on the sticky subject of 'Sweating'.

● **28th Cracow Festival of Short Films** (28 May-1 June 1991) staggers on, organised this year by a management committee following the demise of its director, Andrzej Kolodynski. The festival covers all kinds of shorts, including video, and has regularly included international programmes by women film-makers.

● **10th Uppsala International Film Festival** (18-27 October 1991) has a busy programme of over 100 documentaries, animated films and shorts, including a special children's section. In 1990 the prize for best animated film went to the ubiquitous *Creature Comforts*, which tied with Pascale Ferran's *Le Baiser* as the public's favourite.

● **15th Rencontres Internationales Henri Langlois** (2-8 December 1991) takes place in Poitiers and features movies from film-school graduates with

a view to showcasing future talent. Special programmes include early shorts by the likes of Wim Wenders, Martin Scorsese and Roman Polanski.

● **Short Cuts** (February 1992) showcases French product by presenting to London audiences at the French Institute the pick of the March **Brest Festival du Court Métrage**. In 1991, however, three British films turned up, including Nick Park's *A Grand Day Out*.

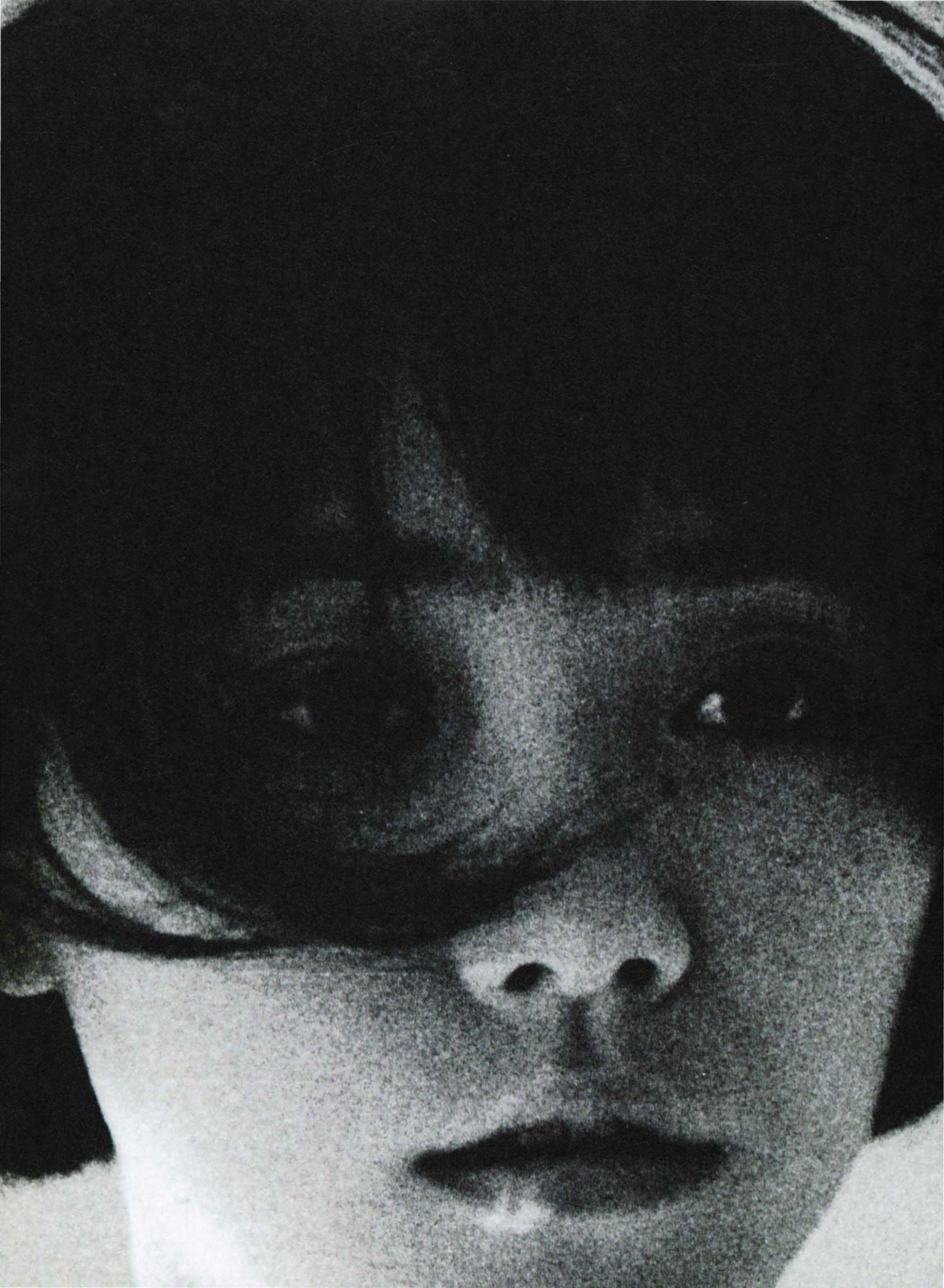
● **22nd Tampere International Short Film Festival** (March 1992) celebrates a wide variety of

shorts. 1991 saw special programmes of women's films and videos, a large animated section, 'The Faces of Islam' (films from Egypt, Turkmenistan and Arab countries), as well as the regular student-film screenings, apparently hugely popular with Finnish audiences. Special Jury Prize went to Australian Tracey Moffat's *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy*.

● **2nd Bombay International Film Festival for Documentary and Short Films** (March 1992; bi-annual). Organised by the government's films

division, the 1990 festival featured over 600 films. The long life of the short film was celebrated with a four-hour Méliès retrospective, while other special events included a look back at the films of 'angry young man' Sukhdev.

Of the general festivals, the **15th São Paulo International Film Festival** (17-31 October 1991) contains a substantial shorts section and the **5th Leeds Film Festival** (11-26 October 1991) will continue to provide a platform with its Channel 4-sponsored 'Focus on Short Films'.



How can the British press ignore the rich variety of current Japanese cinema? Left, the incestuous lover of her amnesiac brother in Yazaki Hitoshi's 'March Comes in Like a Lion'; right, a gang boy from 'Akira', the sophisticated animation film by Otomo Katsuhiro



A partial eclipse of the sun

Why has a recent delicious Japanese variation of *Dirty Harry* not been seen in Britain? And why does Japanese cinema here still mean Kurosawa? Tony Rayns explains

Late last year Britain inflicted 'UK90', a festival of British arts, on Japan. In the last four months of this year, Japan will repay the compliment with 'Japan Festival 1991', a nationwide blitz of concerts, exhibitions, movies, theatre performances and sports. Government ministers on both sides have quoted all the standard platitudes about mutual understanding, and no one has mentioned the price of Scotch whisky in Tokyo or the level of Japanese investment in Britain. Neat, but will the festival have any concrete, long-term effects? Will it, to take one small example, lead the British press to take Japanese cinema seriously again?

You have to look back two full decades to find a time when new Japanese films were routinely taken into art-house distribution in this country. The companies dominating foreign film distribution at the time were not exactly dedicated auteurs, but they did make a point of viewing new work by a number of 'name' directors to assess its suitability for the UK market; Ichikawa, Shindo, Imamura, Oshima and Teshigahara headed the list. (Kurosawa,

naturally, was already accepted as an 'Old Master' whose films would be released as a matter of course.) The late 60s was also the heyday of the film society movement, and every self-respecting society felt obliged to include at least one example of Japanese 'exotica' in its annual programme. All of this came to an end in the early 70s, since when amazingly few Japanese movies have been seen here in cinemas or on television.

What happened? The short answer is that a lot of things changed, both here and there. In Japan, the studio system collapsed and the few surviving major companies moved down-market, making genre movies with minimal export potential. At the same time, Tokyo's Art Theatre Guild began its phased withdrawal from production – thereby aborting the nascent independent production sector.

In Britain, new companies like Cinegate arrived to shake up the art-house circuit, but proved more interested in mining the back catalogue of Ozu and Mizoguchi classics than in distributing new Japanese movies. Also ►

◀ the liberalisation of censorship in Europe and the US ushered in English-language movies that made it unnecessary for distributors to look as far afield as Japan for their high-class sexual exploitation movies. (Many Japanese films of the 60s – for example, Teshigahara's *Woman of the Dunes*, Imamura's *The Pornographers* and Shindo's *Onibaba* – had been sold primarily as *risqué* nights out.) The only film of the 70s that upheld Japan's reputation as a purveyor of sophisticated sex was Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses*, which was financed from Paris and sold internationally by its French producer. It is rereleased this month in Britain, reputedly uncut.

Vanishing point

The virtual disappearance of Japanese films from British screens since the early 70s is a phenomenon without parallel in the film world. It's as if a previously well-regarded film culture had suddenly died in the minds of the film establishment. British television, which has generally done a good job in compensating for the decline of repertory cinemas and the lack of adventurousness in art-house programming, has done nothing to fill this particular gap. The BBC has premiered just one Japanese movie in the last five years (Morita's important *The Family Game*), while Channel 4 has contented itself with minor Kurosawa, old art-house staples and sumo wrestling.

More remarkable yet, Japanese cinema seems to have become a 'dead zone' in the consciousness of our esteemed newspaper critics. When Japanese films do get released here (like *The Enchantment* and *Akira*, both of which have broken the house record at London's ICA cinema in recent months), they go unmentioned in many newspaper columns and get written off in brief in most others. This may well point to the comforting conclusion that the gap between the national press and actual filmgoers is wider than ever, but it also indicates how far our cultural commentators are from any engagement with contemporary Japan.

Aside from Kurosawa's increasingly geriatric efforts (what could be sadder than *Dreams*, the film of an isolated old man who imagines that he is expressing his innermost feelings and winds up making children's television?), most of the Japanese movies released here in the last decade have been striking one-offs that came to prominence at Cannes or other festivals. I'm thinking of titles like Imamura's *The Ballad of Narayama*, Yanagimachi's *Fire Festival*, Itami's *Tampopo* and Kaneko's *Summer Vacation 1999*.

All of these did respectable business in UK art cinemas, but the only one actively welcomed in the British press was the wretchedly opportunistic *Tampopo*, a patronising middle-brow satire on the quest for 'perfect' working-class food. Why did Itami's film command more attention than the others? Was it because of the sex? Most of the film comprises patchy anecdotes about food, money and table manners, but the scene that excited most comment in the reviews was the gangster's kiss: a torrid, slaverish affair that involved passing an egg



yolk from mouth to mouth. *Narayama*, *Fire Festival* and *Summer Vacation 1999*, by contrast, are all conceptually challenging movies rooted in specifically Japanese realities and fantasies. Is that why the British press shrugged them off?

There's a very dubious paradox here. In the 60s, when ignorance of Japan was widespread and relatively excusable, critics tended to claim an easy familiarity with Japanese culture and went along with the juries at Cannes and Venice in accepting Japanese movie exports as masterpieces. But in the 90s, with Tokyo a non-stop flight away, entire bookshops devoted to English-language studies of Oriental cultures, and everyone grasping for hand-outs from the Japanese coffers, critics feel no compunction about writing off an Imamura film in a paragraph or skipping the press show of Nagasaki's *The Enchantment*.

Edges in focus

No one articulates it in such naked terms, but the notion that Japanese cinema is no longer to be taken seriously seems to have taken root very deeply. Who, then, would envy David Barrie, the British director of 'Japan Festival 1991'? He has some £12 million at his disposal to flood the country with events and images that are supposed to 'explain' Japan. London

inevitably gets the lion's share. The film component is also centred on London, with special seasons at the National Film Theatre and the Barbican.

A glance through the projected programme suggests that the overall effect will be to reinforce existing stereotypes of Japanese culture. As you might expect, the central premise is that Japan's culture is monumentally *cohesive*. The keynote will be set by an exhibition designed by Isozaki Arata at the Victoria and Albert Museum; it will show, we are told, "how the economic, social and cultural make-up of the Japanese people can be explained in terms of the workings of a game". This turns out to mean showing how a sixteenth-century tea-house relates to modern consumer products – a continuum of exquisite Japaneseness.

The film programmes will certainly do their bit to consolidate the sense that Japanese film culture fell ill on its way to the 90s. The NFT season celebrates the use of the CinemaScope lens in Japanese films between 1957 and 1971 and highlights films from Uchida Tomu's hopelessly dated series about the legendary samurai Miyamoto Musashi. It is true that some Japanese directors used the 'Scope frame more creatively than many of their western contemporaries, but it's hard to see what this tells us



Minimalism meets surrealism, left, in 'Kikuchi' by Iwamoto Kenchi; 'The Cherry Orchard' by Nakahara Shun, below, based on a manga comic strip; 'Bicycle Sighs', bottom, by Sono Shion



about either Japan or the cinema. After all, Japan stopped using 'Scope for the same reasons as everyone else (it lacked definition and didn't fit the TV screen) and close examination of the evidence reveals that Japanese cinematographers burdened with anamorphic lenses had the same trouble keeping the edges of the frame in focus as their western colleagues.

Still, the NFT is a cinematheque, and it has a standing duty to explore by-ways of film history. But it seems sad that the chance to make up for the lamentable inadequacy of the Japanese selections in recent London film festivals has been missed. The programme at the

Barbican at least has the merit of acknowledging that Japan still produces films. It runs to two 1990 titles, Nakahara Shun's disappointing *The Cherry Orchard* (end-of-term Chekhov in a girls' school) and Yanagimachi's *Shadow of China* (Chinese politics and the future of Hong Kong reduced to the level of *Dynasty* or *Dallas*). But the season is limited by one of those conceptual frameworks so beloved of film-programmers. Entitled 'The Big Fifty', it offers fifty movies by fifty different directors.

New noir

Hardly anything in the season is in current distribution here, and so it fulfils a useful repertory function, but the selection is overwhelmingly weighted to titles from bygone eras. There is a smattering of rarities from the 30s, a core of stolid dramas from the 50s and a few token 'new wave' memories from the 60s. Most of the 80s choices are by directors whose careers peaked much earlier: Ichikawa (represented by his overdressed adaptation of *The Makioka Sisters*, 1983), Kumai Kei (another redundant literary adaptation: *The Sea and Poison*, 1986, based on Endo's novel about wartime experiments in vivisection) and Yoshida Yoshishige (the lugubrious euthanasia drama *The Promise*, 1986, devoid of his earlier 'new wave' tics and tropes).

Anyone combing the Barbican programme for signs of future life in Japanese cinema will find the experience unrewarding. The only 'up-and-coming' directors on the list are Nakahara Shun (*The Cherry Orchard*, based on a popular manga comic strip by Yoshida Akimi, is his first aesthetically ambitious movie) and Sakamoto Junji, whose *Knock-out* (1989) is a raucous boxing picture much admired by Japanese critics and audiences but unlikely to repeat its Japanese success abroad.

Does it stretch a point to suggest a link between this kind of backward-looking programming and the prevailing critical indifference to Japan's current cinema? The two factors have undoubtedly conspired to help keep new Japanese films off British screens. It goes without saying that anything that narrows our already slim access to films from other cultures is regrettable, but to neglect Japanese cinema in the 90s is worse than blinkered: it's plain stupid. Japan's film industry is in no better shape than France's or Britain's, but individual Japanese film-makers have produced more interesting work in the last few years than most of western Europe's film-makers put together.

The commercial success of *The Enchantment* in London tends to confirm my belief that film-makers like Nagasaki Shunichi have plenty to offer the world. The film takes the material of a Freudian case history, strips it of psychoanalytic mystification and turns it into a dark, adult fairy tale. London audiences audibly appreciated the plot twists (it's a tale of lesbian *amour fou*, which ends with the almost ritual humiliation of a man by two women) and the neo-film noir stylings. Thanks to backing from independent producers and Japanese television, Nagasaki was able to make *The Enchant-*

ment on 35mm, but he imbues it with the same distorted sense of human passions that he brought to his early Super-8 and 16mm movies. His success is a measure of the way that the 'fringe' is now invading the 'mainstream'.

Four Japanese movies were programmed in this February's Berlin film festival and three of them came from the same production sector as *The Enchantment*. Yazaki Hitoshi (one-time assistant to Nagasaki) premiered his second feature, *March Comes in Like a Lion*, doubtless the most subversive account of incestuous passion since *Les Enfants terribles*. A cheery young ice-cream vendor tells her amnesiac brother that she's his lover and sets up home with him, pending the return of his memory. Yazaki realises Coleridge's dream of a sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice.

Poet and Super-8 film-maker Sono Shion showed his first 16mm feature *Bicycle Sighs*, a small-town blues about kids on the verge of adulthood refusing to surrender their teenage ideals and fantasies. The film 'poeticises' the everyday with quite remarkable poignancy, and its sincerity is scalding. Former manga writer Iwamoto Kenchi also premiered his first-ever film, *Kikuchi*, a hyperstylised vision of a week in the life of a taciturn laundry worker who lives for his crush on the girl at the supermarket check-out. If the young David Lynch had directed *Jeanne Dielmann*, the result would have been something like Iwamoto's film: minimalism meets surrealism at the dry cleaner's. Needless to say, none of these outstanding films finds any place in 'Japan Festival 1991'.

Cops and baseball

But then neither do any of the more exciting commercial movies of the last few years. The absence of Otomo Katsuhiro's *Akira* is understandable, since it's already taking British box offices by storm. But why is there nothing from Kitano Takeshi, who has had phenomenal critical and commercial success since he turned director two years ago? Takeshi is known to western audiences only for his appearance as Sgt Hara, the 'common soldier', in Oshima's *Merry Christmas*, *Mr Lawrence*, but it cannot be too long before his own films get international exposure. His debut feature *The Violent Cop* (he plays the title role as well as directing) is a deliciously eccentric variation on the *Dirty Harry* formula, and he has followed it up with the equally distinctive 3-4x *October*, which uses a clash between a young baseball team and a *yakuza* gang to get under the skin of Japanese small-mindedness.

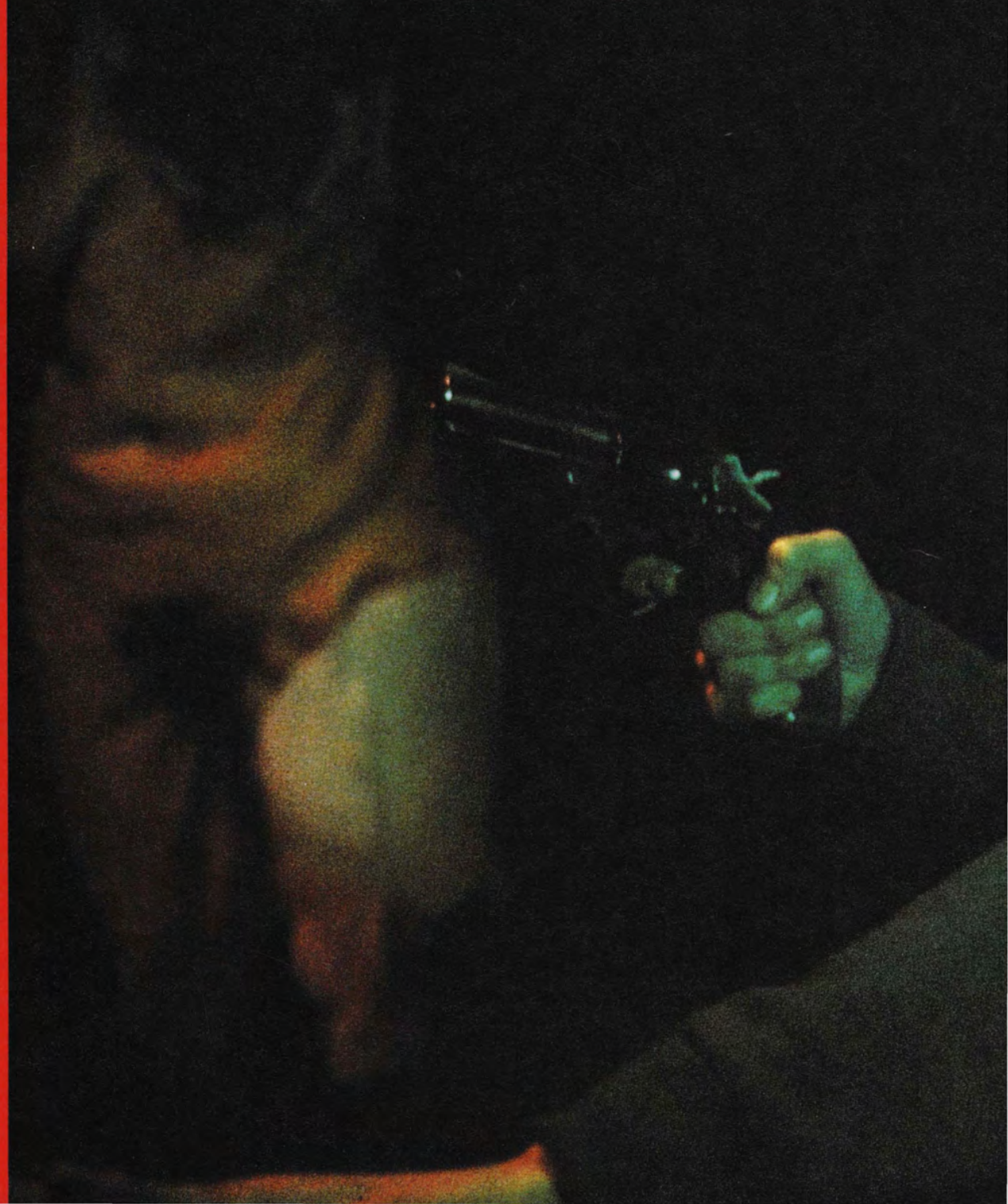
Nobody finds it easy to make movies in the 90s. Money is short, markets are fickle, there are too many festivals and not enough buyers, and few directors can boast any real sense of vocation any more. If Japan has film-makers who are coping with these problems better than most, then isn't it a touch self-defeating to overlook them?

Japanese names are given in their Japanese form: surname first. The NFT season opens at the beginning of September; the Barbican season, 'The Big Fifty', opens at the end of September.

Serial killer movies run riot in our

Amy Taubin

Killing men



imaginations. What lies at the heart of the bloody chamber?



Hero Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), an FBI trainee, hunts down Buffalo Bill, the flayer of women, in his lair in Jonathan Demme's 'The Silence of the Lambs'

The serial killer has attained A-list status in several media, and the press, spotting a trend, has geared itself up to dismember him and drink his blood. The noise around both Jonathan Demme's film *The Silence of the Lambs* and Bret Easton Ellis' yuppie-splatter novel *American Psycho* began to build last autumn in New York. At around the same time Martin Scorsese announced himself as executive producer of the next film by John McNaughton, director of *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, and *Twin Peaks* came back on the TV with a second two-hour feature directed by David Lynch.

Ellis' book, an up-market *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* intended perhaps as escapist reading for recently unemployed business executives, was bound for the lit-crit hatchets from the moment its galleys were leaked. Demme's film, on the other hand, looked like the kind of artistic achievement that might seem too restrained to a mass audience accustomed to the high body count of cyber gore and police action pictures. Yet *The Silence of the Lambs* broke through the \$100 million mark, having raked in \$71 million, and held first place on the charts for the first five weeks of its run.

Equally unexpectedly, the chill blue, cobra-hooded eyes of one of the film's serial killers, Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), dominated the news-stands, peering insolently from the

covers of *Newsweek*, the Arts and Leisure section of the Sunday *New York Times* and countless lesser journals – momentarily replacing both Arnold-the-Terminator and his stand-in, Stormin' Norman, as reigning ubermensch.

In the less respectable playgrounds of cyberpunk and splatterpunk, the serial killer is also the top dog. Fanzines publish profiles and memorabilia. Galleries such as AMOK in Los Angeles show jailhouse paintings by Charles Manson (the first serial killer to become a household name) and John Gacy, the married Chicago businessman who was arrested for the murder of thirty-three boys and young men, some of whom he buried beneath his suburban home. In a *Vanity Fair* interview last year, John Waters explained that what he has in common with (Edward Scissorhands) Johnny Depp is they both own paintings by Gacy. (For the curious: he's not an interesting painter.)

According to unofficial justice department estimates as many as 100 serial killers may be on the loose in the US. Prior to 1950 new serial killers surfaced perhaps once a decade; today it's more like once a month. With just 5 per cent of the world's population, the US is believed to have about 75 per cent of the world's serial killers.

Disturbing as these figures are, the fact is that the number of people who will die at the hands of serial killers doesn't even bear comparison with, for example, the number of women who will die because they don't have access to breast screening, or even know it exists. But institutionalised violence – the destruction of millions of lives through poverty and neglect, the abuse practised against women and children, the slaughter of 100,000 Iraqis – has no easy representation. The image of the serial killer acts as a substitute and a shield for a situation so incomprehensible and threatening it must be disavowed.

Unlike urban action pictures, which imply, with rare exceptions, that the threat to America is ghettoised, that it can be policed and locked away (as long as the invading third world hordes are kept at bay), serial killer films are set in white neighbourhoods – suburbia, the farm belt, the back woods. The serial killer is a marauder: he might turn up anywhere. And in fact, almost all serial killers are white males who kill within their own racial group. Bred in the heartlands, he's the deformed version of the American dream of the individual. In *The Silence of the Lambs*, the second serial killer (Hannibal Lecter's low-life counterpart) is named "Buffalo Bill".

The Silence of the Lambs is not the first art/entertainment cross-over to take on the subject of the serial killer. Classic examples include Fritz Lang's *M* (1931), Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947) and more peripherally, G. W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1928). They depict, respectively, three pathological archetypes: the child murderer; the Bluebeard figure whose victims are wives (ie good girls); and Jack the Ripper who specialises in killing prostitutes (ie bad girls). But it was, of course, Hitchcock, who by crossing the psychological thriller with the horror

movie established conventions that have governed the genre for the past thirty years.

Psycho was adapted from Robert Bloch's 50s best seller of the same name, based on the truth-is-stranger-than-fiction case of Ed Gein, a small-town Wisconsin handyman. His necrophiliac compulsions escalated from digging up corpses (most of them buried in the immediate vicinity of his late mother) to murdering as many as ten women. He kept various trophies from his victims – their heads and pieces of their skin. In addition to *Psycho*, Gein partly inspired such disparate films as Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, James Benning's avant-garde *Murder/Suicide* and *The Silence of the Lambs*.

According to Stephen Rebello's excellent study, *Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho*, Hitchcock was anxious to make a picture that would not only prove more shocking than Henri Clouzot's *Diabolique* (1955), but would be perceived as the first 60s movie. While *Psycho's* image of the knife-wielding maniac drove most of the slasher movies of the 60s and the teenie-kills of the 70s, the later films lacked the psychological dimension that distinguished Norman Bates (the pathological connections of sex and violence, voyeurism and sadism, castration fear and misogyny, and the deep confusion about gender that is played out in his transvestite splitting).

Minimally drawn, the psychos of the slasher and teenie-kill films lack behavioural characteristics and developmental histories. The Freddy's, the Michaels (*Halloween*) and the Jasons (*Friday the 13th*) correspond to the real thing only in that they find pleasure (ecstasy) in killing rather than in sex. The interesting exception is the original *Friday the 13th*, which intentionally reverses the *Psycho* syndrome by making the killer a woman – Jason's mother.

In such films serial killing is a function not of character, but of the internal narrative structure and motifs (the piling up of bodies one after another). Even more importantly, it is a function of the relationship of each film both to its sequels and to all the other serials in the genre.

It is the killer's ability to rise from the dead in film after film – rather than his appearance, his physical strength or even the extreme sadism of his actions – that demonises him. Thirty years of these films have primed audiences to bind the words 'serial' and 'killer' into the image of a superhuman monster. "He's back!" "Coming again this summer!" But in fact, the serial killer is as mortal as his victims and his motives and feelings, while pathological, are not difficult to comprehend. It is the institutions and ideology which produce him that live on from generation to generation.

Just as the psychos of the teenie-kill films haunted the safe havens of middle-class suburbia, serial killers have now invaded prime-time. Programmes like *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* present mini-case histories (including teenie-kill style re-enactments of the crime) and invite viewers to assist in apprehending the criminal. John List (dubbed "Murder Dad" by the *Daily News*) was found



Tending the corpse of his mother, Norman Bates in 'Psycho', top, is the appalling progenitor of those scourges of women who haunt the more recent teenie-kill films such as 'A Nightmare on Elm Street', above

because of a tip from a viewer who recognised him from a photo on *America's Most Wanted*.

List was the model for the serial killer in *The Stepfather*, a sardonically witty attack on the patriarchal nuclear family directed by Joseph Ruben with a script by Donald Westlake. The stepfather marries into existing families (widows with children and well-kept suburban homes). When they fail to live up to his sit-com expectations, he slaughters them all and moves on. Dripping with references to TV Dads from Mr Ed to Robert Young, *The Stepfather*, a failure in its cinema release, happily found a second life in the home-video market.

The most notorious of the TV serial killers is, of course, Leland Palmer, father, murderer and rapist of Laura Palmer, the much fetishised 'dead girl' upon whose corpse the narrative of David Lynch and Mark Frost's *Twin Peaks* is hung. Of course, it should have been obvious from the start that the killer had to be a Dad. Lynch's Dads are always murderous. In *Blue Velvet*, it's not just Frank who is the threat. Take a good look at Laura Dern's police-chief father, who never takes off his gun, not even in his own home. It's the Dads who pass on the lessons of misogyny and homophobia that they learned from their own fathers. So it makes perfect sense that Bob is Leland's Mrs Bates, the projection of his own shattered psyche in the

form of the person who had abused him when he was a child.

TV violence is almost always quick, disembodied and impersonal (during the Iraq war, the networks completely caved in to US censorship rules forbidding them to show "pictures of soldiers with disfiguring or agonising wounds"). *Twin Peaks* is the first primetime series to show bodies that bleed. Too bad that nearly all of them are female. Still, the scene in which Leland kills Maddie gives one a visceral sense of male sexual violence: what it's like when a middle-aged man beats a teenage girl to death. All the more the pity that they threw it away totally in the next episode. Here, Agent Cooper muses whether it's easier to believe that a man would rape and kill his own daughter than that he was taken over by an alien (Bob) who could walk through walls.

The legacy of male violence is what binds TV's *Twin Peaks* to the cinema's latest incarnations of the serial killer – *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, completed four years ago but only recently finding an audience on the art-film and midnight circuits. What cuts off *Henry* from *Twin Peaks*, and even more from *The Silence*, is its point of view. The central character of *Henry* is a psychopathic ex-con who drifts through a killing spree that began when, at age fourteen, he murdered his mother. "She was a prostitute. I don't hold that against her... but she made me watch her doing it... that wasn't right... sometimes she'd dress me up in girl's clothes to watch".

In the first ten minutes, McNaughton evokes an atmosphere of extreme disassociation which both suggests the pathological subjectivity of the killer and at the same time functions to put some distance between the viewer and the action. 'Distanciation', which in most current film theory is considered a positive condition, is creepily revealed as the emotional framework of murder.

Dazzlingly simple, McNaughton's method in these early scenes is basically to separate the sound from the picture and to ellide completely the visual image of the murderous moment. Four times in a row we see a woman's mutilated corpse, but it's not until the camera has retreated from the image that the sound begins: a woman screaming. The voice, crudely processed with echo effect, continues over a shot of the anonymous-looking killer walking across a street. Each time Henry describes how he killed his mother, the weapon changes.

Henry moves in with his prison buddy Otis and Otis' sister Luanne. She has run away from the violently abusive husband she married to get away from her sexually abusive father. Luanne is attracted to Henry, who talks soft and wears clean tank tops that show off his arms. Luanne thinks Henry is shy, but she's wrong. Henry is impotent; when he needs to prove he's a man he picks up a knife or an ice-pick or whatever's handy.

Then Henry decides to teach Otis about hunting humans. When the two of them start to work as a team, the sound and the picture in

the film also get together. The kills, shown from beginning to end, follow one after another, and *Henry*, for all its dreamy camera moves and sly-eyed close-ups, begins to seem like just a regular exploitation flic, albeit an extremely sadistic one.

In the film's most ingenious sequence, Henry and Otis massacre a nice middle-class suburban family. The event is shot in real time, without cuts, from the point of view of a home-video camera. The premise is that Henry and Otis, having stolen the camera, take it with them on their adventure. They plug it into the family's living-room TV so they can watch themselves in live action.

Less imaginative about technology than the serial killer in Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* – another abused child – who turns his 16mm camera literally into a deadly weapon, Henry and Otis are at least up-to-date in their choice of equipment. In *Henry*, it is the home-video apparatus that is implicated in the repetition-compulsion of the serial killer and that demonstrates the connection between sadism and voyeurism.

Our view of the massacre is confined to the TV (it fills the frame). On it we see and hear the following: Otis drags a screaming, struggling woman into the room and starts tearing off her clothes. The camera (presumably hand-held by Henry) pans down to the husband tied up on the floor, also struggling. A kid walks into the room unaware of what's happening. The image flops 45 degrees sideways (Henry has dropped the camera as he goes to grab the kid) and remains in this position for the rest of the scene. Henry throws the kid on the floor and breaks his neck. The wife is still struggling and screaming. Otis is laughing and groping under her panty hose when suddenly he snaps her neck. Henry finishes off the husband and, noticing that Otis has started to get very familiar with the woman's corpse, says, with puritanical disgust, "Otis don't do that". Cut to Otis and Henry sitting side by side on the couch, relaxed and bonded like two regular guys watching football. "I want to see it again", whines the infantile Otis, hitting the slo-mo button on the remote.

The camera zooms languorously past their attentive faces towards the TV screen. There is no doubt about whose eyes we're looking through, and as the scratchy theme music swells above the woman's screams, no doubt, either, about where the director's sympathies lie. A film that started off being about psychopathology and its relationship to misogyny has turned blatantly misogynist.

In his *Vanity Fair* review of *American Psycho*, Norman Mailer comes to the conclusion that the novel fails as a work of art because the central character, the killer Patrick Bateman, lacks an "inner life", a subjectivity. The problem in *Henry* is that Henry is the *only* character who is allowed to be a subject. His victims certainly are not.

For a while, McNaughton seems to toy with making Luanne into a second subject. Unfortunately, he cops out. When Henry kills ►



Just looking: the killer in 'Peeping Tom', top, uses his camera as a deadly weapon and films his murders; Henry in 'Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer', above, videos his carnage and watches it in action replay

◀ Luanne, it happens off screen. McNaughton doesn't seem to consider that Luanne's reaction to Henry's attack might be worthy of attention. Nor does he show her corpse. Had he displayed the dead Luanne in the same way as he did the anonymous mutilated bodies in the opening sequences, it would have been horrifying enough to transform retroactively the meaning of all the kill scenes in the film. But instead, McNaughton opts for a ghoulish joke – cutting from Henry and Luanne in a motel room, to Henry driving off alone, to Henry lifting an oozing suitcase from the trunk of the car and dropping it at the side of the highway.

What marks out *The Silence of the Lambs* is that it is a profoundly feminist movie. For women I know, most of whom have seen it more than once, the film is as exhilarating as it is harrowing. *The Silence of the Lambs* is to the psychological thriller-horror combo what the stories in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* are to gothic fairy tales such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Bluebeard'. It takes a familiar narrative and shakes up the gender and sexuality stuff. It's a slasher film in which the woman is hero rather than victim, the pursuer rather than the pursued.

Fledgling FBI trainee Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) has been chosen by her boss Jack Crawford (Scott Glenn), head of Behavioral



Crossing the border: Clarice Starling, top, in 'The Silence of the Lambs', entering Hannibal Lecter's dark dungeon. Lecter, above and right, has an oral appetite for human flesh as well as for language

Science – the FBI unit that investigates serial killers – for a special task. A serial killer nicknamed "Buffalo Bill" is murdering women and doing something terrible with their skin. Tacked up on Crawford's wall is a tabloid clipping with the headline "Bill skins Fifth", and below it, polaroids of flayed female corpses. Clarice stares intently but she keeps her distance – as does Demme's camera. "Do you spook easily Starling?", Crawford enquires.

Crawford believes that the brilliant psychiatrist and psychopath Hannibal Lecter, whose ferocious oral impulses find their release in language and, less acceptably, in human flesh, may know the killer's identity. Since Crawford has helped to confine Lecter for life in a hospital for the criminally insane, he doubts that the doctor will have much interest in helping him. He decides to use Clarice as a lure, sending her off to Lecter armed with a fake survey questionnaire. If Lecter is intrigued by Clarice, he won't be able to resist playing the omniscient analyst – leaking clues. And if Clarice is really lucky, Lecter might even tell her what to do. (The film, like the novel, is nothing if not deeply ambivalent about psychoanalysis.)

"Whatever you do Clarice, don't tell him anything about yourself", Crawford warns. It's a bit of paternalistic advice that demands to be ignored, especially by this hero, intent on finding her own way. Besides, time is running out. "Anytime now, our Billy Boy is going to start looking for that next special lady", Lecter taunts.

Faithful to the plot and incident of Thomas Harris' best seller, Demme shifts its tone and meaning. The film makes Clarice even more central (and more isolated) than she was in the novel – a narrative fact that the mainstream media, infatuated with Hannibal the Cannibal, is doing its best to ignore.

Harris' Clarice, for all her courage and desire for independence, was still the good daughter who needed to be valued by the men in her life. She was emotionally tied not only to her real father – the policeman who left her an orphan at age eleven – but to the substitute fathers: Lecter (the bad) and Crawford (the good). Harris' Clarice became romantically involved with Crawford, an unconsummated, guilty, Oedipal attachment since he was married and his wife was dying.

Demme's and Foster's Clarice is remote in a way that signals something more complex than a novice's attempt at a professional attitude. Demme shoots the scenes between Lecter and Clarice in extreme close-up, shot-undershot, with the actors looking almost directly into the camera. You can see the tension in Clarice's face, her concentrated struggle not only to get the information she needs from Lecter, but also not to be overwhelmed by him – to maintain her separation from him.

And to get it right. And to do it all herself. When Lecter points out her limitations and her failures, there's no doubt she feels ashamed and angry. But it's because she hasn't lived up to her own expectations, not because he thinks less of her. Crawford gets in her way too and his

paternalism annoys her. He never gets it more wrong than when he congratulates Clarice by saying, "Your father would have been proud of you". She doesn't care about that.

In terms of the frightening fairy-tale world that Demme's Grimm gothic imagery suggests and Lecter's locutions zing home, Clarice's mission is not to marry the prince but to rescue the maiden (actually the Senator's daughter who has become Buffalo Bill's "next special lady"). On that reversal her identity rests. It's also what fascinates Lecter and what wins him to her cause: unlike most heroes of either sex, she's more moved by vulnerability than she is attracted to power.

In its aching romanticism, Howard Shore's score is reminiscent of Bernard Herrmann's for *Psycho*. In the opening scene, where Clarice, alone in the woods, is running an FBI school obstacle course, it is tied to her yearning and terror and sense of loss. Demme punctuates it with sound effects that have enormous threatening presence. There are the piercing bird calls of the opening and the clanging gates as Clarice descends into the dungeons where Lecter is locked away. And there are the whirring deathhead moths that Buffalo Bill breeds in his oozing basement, the way the US, as Lecter puts it, breeds serial killers. ("Our Bill wasn't born like this. He was made to be this way through years of systematic abuse".)

Amazingly fluid, *The Silence of the Lambs* shifts back and forth from gothic fantasy to police procedural drama. Demme knows how to map psyche and history on to landscape and objects. The film is packed with 300 years of relics – of white America. Every time Lecter sends Clarice on a treasure hunt – to a storage warehouse, for example – she finds a flag or two tucked away with the rusty rifles, dressmakers' dummies and the odd severed head preserved in a jar. The flags look as if they've seen better days.

Detective stories and psychoanalysis both investigate traumas of the past. Here the two (Clarice's search for Buffalo Bill and Lecter's unorthodox analysis of Clarice) are mixed against a background of government buildings, chicken farms and lonely airports where everyone is walking around looking bewildered – as if they'd just noticed that they'd lost everything.

Near the end of the film, in the aftermath of Clarice's battle with Buffalo Bill, the camera lingers for a moment in a corner of the killer's lair, now lit with a shaft of light from a window broken in the struggle. First, there's a medium shot of a child's-size American flag leaning against a dusty army helmet and then a close-up of a sea-blue paper mobile with a butterfly design – a bit of Chinatown interior decoration or a trophy from Vietnam, Bill's inheritance and his legacy.

Which is why the final image of Lecter after his murderous escape, sauntering down a crowded main street in Haiti resplendent in his creamy tourist suit, is more disturbing than anything that has come before. The serial killer, an American gift to the third world, a fragmentation bomb, ready to explode.



Hannibal
Lecter,
serial
killer, an
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explode

"I don't think I'll ever work again. My eyes are burned out", jokes cinematographer Ed Lachman. It's the morning after the wrap on *London Kills Me*, Hanif Kureishi's directorial debut, but in fact Lachman isn't referring to the eight-week shoot. For a change he finds himself at the other end of the camera, patiently adopting assorted poses, half blinded by the portrait photographer's scorching spotlight. "This is what we call 'Chinese Doors'", he says, deftly adjusting its louvers to resemble the half-opened bud of a black crocus.

A pose is proposed using both arms to frame the face; Lachman immediately cites a Dorothea Lange shot for the Farm Security Administration by way of precedent. Even as the picture's subject, his visual rolodex keeps on spinning. "I see everything in frames", he says later, in his New Jersey drawl.

**Photograph by
Jillian Edelstein**

The story of the



Ed Lachman apprenticed with several of the *éminences grises* of cinematography – Sven Nykvist, Vittorio Storaro and Robby Müller – but compared to them, he is something of a chameleon. He describes himself laconically as "a visual gypsy", at home wherever the next project takes him. But aside from conveying his nomadic lifestyle, the phrase also captures his propensity for tailoring a visual language to the narrative in hand. "It's always a search for the style in the material: how do I tell this story uniquely in relation to any other story?"

Lachman has worked as director of photography with a wide range of directors, both European and American, including Wim Wenders (on *Lightning over Water* and *Tokyo-Ga*), Susan Seidelman (on *Desperately Seeking Susan* and *Making Mr Right*), David Byrne (on *True Stories*), Jean-Luc Godard (on *Passion*), Bertolucci (collaborating with Storaro on the New York sequences of *La Luna*) and Werner Herzog (on *Stroszek* and *La Soufrière*). Immediately prior to shooting Kureishi's film, he had been in Uganda and then the Deep South of the US, filming Mira Nair's second feature, *Mississippi Masala*. These were restorative experiences after the "demoralising" efforts of shooting *Less Than Zero* for Marek Kanievski and Dennis Hopper's *Backtrack* (renamed

Light, colour and movement are the stuff of Ed Lachman's life. Cinematographer to Godard and Susan Seidelman, he talks to Janet Abrams, the morning after the wrap on Hanif Kureishi's new film

Catchfire), only to have the Hollywood production system take its toll; both films were re-edited to accord with the studios' notion of market tastes.

He sees studio intervention as one of the major differences between European and American film-making. "In the States, often a producer regards a film merely as a product and comes in as some kind of secondary director, tries to be a creative decision-maker overlapping the director's role. A studio can come back and say a film's 'too dark' or 'there aren't enough close-ups' – already that will affect the approach in the story telling. In Europe there seems to be more respect towards the position of the director; the producer is there to give guidance and support to their vision."

Between finishing Dennis Hopper's film and starting work on Nair's, he turned down offers to film *Ghostbusters II* and *Twins*, and instead spent two years pursuing several smaller documentary projects of his own. *Get Your Kicks On Route 66*, an experimental documentary made for PBS television, traced the remnants of the fabled highway from Chicago to Los Angeles, focusing on the people who lived, worked and drove along it. He also filmed *Songs for 'Drella*, the Lou Reed/John Cale homage to Andy Warhol, and Annie Lennox's contribution to "Red Hot and Blue", the Aids benefit video based on Cole Porter songs.

"I try to involve myself in films by film-makers that I respect, who have a passion for telling a story, because I put the same amount of effort in at my end, photographing the film and coming up with some kind of visualisation. I wouldn't want to shoot a film I wouldn't want to pay to go to see. It's always a gamble, but ultimately the script is the blueprint."

The relationship with the director is "a give and take process" adjusted to their strengths and weaknesses. "When I worked with Wenders, Bertolucci, or Godard, or Herzog, who communicate in a certain visual language, I very much wanted to become part of that language in telling the story. With first-time directors, or with people who aren't as experienced in the visualisation of the narrative, I can explore new possibilities. I welcome both; it's not one or the other. My role is to keep a style consistent in the language of the film."

Lachman repeatedly speaks of images as "the emotional underpinning" to the story telling; the phrase comes up again when describing the work of Robert Frank, one of his favourite still photographers. He offers a distinction between the power of the written or

spoken word, and that of the image. "Whereas a book can enter a character's head for an internal monologue, it's much more difficult for film to do that. An image shows *place*, the emotional context of the characters."

Asked to give an analogy for the relationship of cinematographer to director, Lachman proposes that between a musician and the leader of an orchestra – perhaps because he has just made a film with Rostropovich, one of several documentaries made with leading conductors. At the other end of the musical scale, he has directed rock videos for Tina Turner, Elvis Costello and Billy Idol. He moves between features and non-fiction films and believes that each genre is invested with elements of the other. "I've often felt that all films really are documentary because no performance is ever the same. You're capturing – on that 1/24th of a second – light, movement, the relationship that group of people creates. What I enjoy most is that I'm the first audience. There's the chance to respond to the moment".

On set for *London Kills Me*, Lachman was pleasantly surprised to find that Kureishi too – unusually for a writer, in his experience – was capable of such spontaneity. "He knew what was important to the storyline, but he was also open to what might embellish it, working off the performers, in order to make it live. Everyone was able to develop their role, including the crew. To me that's what directing is about: leading people in a direction, getting the best out of them. It's not this Von Stroheim or Fritz Lang thing of going round with a riding crop."

As with other films, Lachman had prepared a treatment in advance of shooting *London Kills Me*, structured scene by scene around pivotal episodes in the story, with ideas based on light, colour, locations and the development of particular characters. "I like to write out a kind of visual narrative, so there's a beginning, middle and end to the imagery. I feel that visual language has a thematic, the way written language has a narrative, which is for the most part overlooked. If you go into a scene thinking about *whose* story is being told, *why* it's being told, then that gives you a point of view with the camera. Content dictates form."

Lachman found a certain freedom to experiment with his camerawork, taking an approach from Eastern European film-makers who have come out of a documentary background. "If someone reached for an object – like a shoe – that was important for them in the scene, I made the camera feel like it was their eye. Rather than cut to the

object and have the hand come in, I was more interested in following the action – even though there might be a moment I was off their dialogue.”

Lachman's training as a painter, with a particular interest in German Expressionism, has informed his “psychological rather than decorative” use of light and colour. In *London Kills Me*, the characters' exterior and interior worlds are differentiated by rendering the former in cool, grey hues, against warm or neutral tones for the more sympathetic indoor locations. London's uniquely dull winter light limited the hours available for shooting and dictated a certain film stock, but Lachman – though accustomed to New York's chilly-season chiaroscuro – treated it as an intrinsic quality of the city rather than a handicap.

Having returned to operating the camera in the Nair and Kureishi films,

It's about the detail, rather than the 'big picture'. The face is the landscape

he has found himself increasingly absorbed in the actors' performances, virtually unmediated by the hardware. On set he becomes increasingly interested in how the actors play off each other, how a certain visual dynamic can be sparked during the actual filming. “There's something about real time in a film that enhances a performance, something psychologically very good for the actors, even though cutting can be seamless and make a performance seem that way.”

Instead of relying on subsequent editing, the ‘less is more’ approach brought out sharpened sensibilities. “By keeping a performance in a two shot – rather than covering it in three different frame sizes so we'd be sure to have cutting points – everybody got more in tune with each other because we felt we had to get it together. There was more at stake.” The intimate rela-

tion of the camera to the actor is emerging as one of his primary aesthetic concerns. “At a visceral level, the camera is searching to discover who these characters are. More and more I see it's about the detail, rather than the ‘big picture’. The face is the landscape.”

This is certainly the case in *Songs for Drella*, which Lachman directed and photographed. He dispensed with the customary shots of an adulatory audience, concentrating instead on the intensity of the interplay between Lou Reed and John Cale, registered in their facial expressions. It is true of the Annie Lennox video, a poignant rendering of Cole Porter's “Ev'ry Time You Say Goodbye”. Her face literally becomes the screen on to which another film is projected, namely home movies of Derek Jarman's childhood. In this piece, Lachman seems to be trying to overcome film's inability to convey an internal monologue: the singer's own reflections on the person to whom she is bidding farewell are shown, as it were, passing through her own mind – literally, floating across her face.

Lachman's fascination for ‘found’ (or perhaps ‘lost’) images also crops up in other work, such as the *Route 66* documentary, and in *True Stories*, where the framing and palette were inspired by the untrained eye of the amateur photographer. “I was trying to recreate a “found” image, like a snapshot. I looked at how people take pictures of themselves for sentimental purposes or to record information, rather than self-consciously to create an image. I cut buildings off, cut people in half. Sometimes the lighting wasn't what you'd traditionally consider ‘good’ lighting. I realised that when you break an aesthetic it can create a new aesthetic, but you have to know what the rules are to break.”

Though reticent on matters autobiographical, Lachman, now forty-four, admits to an ongoing relationship with the photo booth since film school. “Every time I pass one by...” he begins, then changes tune, checking against the hint of vanity. “On or around my birthday I go into a booth and take a photo of myself. The pictures have no value other than as a record of my changing visual representation, so that when I'm an old man I can animate them to see myself grow older.” Meanwhile, he has a documentary on artist Jenny Holzer to finish, another in preparation on the New York club CBGB and the music of the 70s, and looks likely to shoot Paul Schrader's next feature. One way or another, “I never want to give up the camera.”



What is Channel 4's brand image for the 90s? A mixture of early evening Jonathan Ross and serious documentary, with minority programmes in peak time? Philip Dodd and Theresa Fitzgerald want to know the answers

Three years ago, when Jeremy Isaacs relinquished Channel 4 to Michael Grade, he pronounced the famous Curse of Isaacs: "I'm handing on to you a sacred trust. If you screw it up, if you betray it, I'll come back and throttle you".

Since then, discussion of Channel 4 has too often been reduced to a question of personalities: is it still what it was in the supposedly noble days of Isaacs? Has Grade betrayed the sacred trust? Is the throttling overdue? An almost theological view of the channel has developed, with everyone who works there co-opted into a confrontation between the forces of light and darkness. On one side is the sacred flame of the original remit of innovation, guarded by the likes of director of programmes, Liz Forgan; on the other the legions of crass commercialism headed by recently appointed director of advertising, sales and marketing, Stewart Butterfield.

Grade's own pronouncements, in an interview he gave us, tended, perhaps knowingly, to echo received opinion. According to Grade, the channel before he arrived was in some ways "amateur and eccentric" compared to what he regards as its present status as "a highly

professional national broadcaster". In this, Grade's views neatly reflect a mythology rampant within the organisation itself. Here, the Isaacs years are mistily perceived as a whirl of chaotic and wayward innovation, with Grade arriving like the party-pooper to impose a sobering regime of financial level-headedness and professionalism.

For those who are sympathetic to Grade, it seems he has produced an *effective* management structure, made the channel financially viable, steered it away from assuming that innovation means "unintelligibility" (Grade's own term) and placed 'minority' series such as *Out on Tuesday* and *Black Bag* into peaktime viewing. For the unsympathetic, the channel's 'professionalisation' has meant the abandonment of the remit to innovative programming, genuflection to the market, top-heavy management and a scheduling policy indifferent to anything but good audience figures. This is a widespread view among independent companies, although without exception they were unwilling to have their views put on record.

These general positions are nothing if not entrenched and the actors have rehearsed their lines thoroughly. The ease with which they are

spoken, and the difficulty in moving beyond them, may be precisely because they are rooted in cultural debates within British society.

Channel 4 can be seen as one of the last heirs to the post-war settlement which produced not only the Welfare State but also a cultural 'health service', taking in such institutions as the Arts Council, the BBC and even the new commercial television channels. Common to all of these was the belief that culture was good for you, like orange juice and cod-liver oil. Not until the Thatcher years were these assumptions thrown into question. And the ripples are still a long way from settling, not least at Channel 4.

What happened in broadcasting during the 80s was that the consensus was put under enormous pressure. Broadcasters not only had to deal with constant accusations of liberal-left bias, but were made to face a series of awkward, if telling questions: What's wrong with 'down-market' programmes if more viewers like them? Why should minority tastes, bestowed from above by a broadcasting elite, be paid for by the majority? Why should amateurism, including financial amateurism, be seen as a condition of innovative programming? Why ►

Niche work if you can get it



◀ does the term innovative so often really mean unintelligible?

Norman Tebbit's advice to Channel 4 was typical: "When the Act said cater for interests not catered for on ITV, or be a distinctive service... what you should be doing are programmes for yachtsmen and golfers".

It may be that those opposed to Tebbit didn't feel the need to take him seriously. But if the language of the marketplace is reductive, how adequate is the language of the opposition? During a recent talk to independent producers, Grade tried to woo his audience by saying that he would not be led by sponsors who do not like "the dangerous, the controversial or the avant-garde". Though such descriptions may apply to a few politically sensitive documentaries, they in the end do little more than pander to television-makers' view of themselves as creative dissidents in a repressive regime. More than ever, there seems to be a real need to move beyond a debate in which culture and commerce are simplistically opposed.

Channel 4 could be the place to resolve the dichotomy. After all, it was set up as a place of Thatcherite commercial entrepreneurship – especially in its relationship with independent producers – and as a place of radical innovation. Certainly the channel is better placed to resolve such issues than its rivals. While the ITV companies and the BBC are preoccupied with the enormous changes that are to overtake them in the next few years, Channel 4 at least knows its future, even if this includes

having to raise its own advertising revenue from 1993.

Publicly, as you might expect, the channel is confident that its financial future is secure. Behind the scenes, however, the confidence is tinged with an awareness that the later 90s are going to be hard times. As John Willis, deputy controller of factual programmes, puts it: "In the mid-90s satellite will become a competitor. Maybe Channel 5, too. And some of the new ITV franchises, especially those that paid a lot of money, are likely to come out blazing all guns. So we know it's going to be tough".

Butterfield, on whose shoulders the main responsibility for raising revenue will rest, has a clear idea about the direction Channel 4 needs to follow in order to survive and prosper. What we can expect in the future, he says, is "lots of small-rating programmes as more and more fragmentation takes place". In television jargon this means niche broadcasting, where programmes are targetted at and scheduled for small but committed audiences.

What Channel 4 has to do, according to both Butterfield and Grade, is to go for the upmarket rather than downmarket audience – intelligent talk in both marketing and editorial terms. But if this sounds remarkably like Channel 4's original aim, then there is one crucial difference. In 1982, the channel's remit was substantially protected against market pressures; in the present decade, niche broadcasting is a favoured option *because* it makes market sense. Commerce and culture can be reconciled.

If we take into account what the people at Channel 4 commission and how they programme, as well as what they say, the results too often appear to disregard the opportunities offered by Butterfield's recommendation of "fragmentation". According to Willis, one aim is "to offer an alternative to what's happening elsewhere... Almost by definition it's innovative if it isn't happening on other channels". This sounds less like niche broadcasting than reactive broadcasting: find as large an audience as possible uninterested in what the competition is showing and entertain them.

The bigger the better

So, for instance, it would appear that minority programmes such as *The Media Show* and *Out on Tuesday* are scheduled mid-evening not because that's when their niche audience wants to see them but because they provide an alternative to whatever else is on peaktime television. A telling example is Channel 4's 'cult' late Friday evening success, Jonathan Ross. Grade worked hard to persuade Ross to stay with Channel 4 rather than go to the BBC, and then persuaded him to take an early evening slot, three times a week. When asked about the make-up of Ross' audience, Grade said that what was important was that the audience figures were three times bigger than for the programme formerly in that slot.

Perhaps re-scheduling Ross for early evening would not have mattered if the character of the programme had remained the same. But it did not. At 10.30 in the evening, the pleasure of

Ross' chat show was precisely that it was an anti-chat show; in its early evening version, it is more like Wogan with slightly wackier guests. The consequence of a scheduling decision based primarily on offering an audience something different to what is available at that time on the other channels has been to destroy what was distinctive about the programme in the beginning.

Imageless image

This policy is clearly not restricted to light entertainment. Willis, for example, notes that "the amount of factual programming in peak-time on BBC1 and ITV is very small. They're moving further and further away, becoming more and more commercial, more and more concerned with audience figures. In a way some of the territory they used to inhabit we can now take over, and still be different".

What this suggests is very honorable but regressive. That Channel 4 documentaries should now take over some of the public responsibilities of the other channels is an admirable idea. But perhaps it is worth asking whether the abandonment of a certain kind of documentary by the competition might have been motivated not purely by market considerations, but by a sense that this type of programme has run its course.

Certainly Channel 4's most recent *Cutting Edge* series has included powerful individual documentaries. But the series as a whole would not have appeared out of place on the other channels at any time over the last several years. Unlike the BBC's *Rough Justice* and *Taking Liberties*, which do have strong identities, all that distinguishes *Cutting Edge* is its scheduling slot. Increasingly Channel 4 seems to be occupying ground left vacant by the other channels rather than setting its own agenda.

In the increasingly fragmented 90s, Channel 4's definition of 'professional' as becoming as much like the other broadcasters as possible doesn't make good sense. And in any case, what was appropriate professionalism for BBC and ITV in the late 80s may no longer be appropriate, either editorially or financially, for Channel 4 in the 90s. An example is the channel's relationship with the independent companies or 'suppliers'. When asked if some of the larger independents could reasonably expect to contribute to policy in more than a consultative fashion, Grade says "No", energetically. "I have what the independents don't have – access to airtime. If they don't like the arrangement they can go elsewhere". It couldn't have been said better by a BBC executive.

In obvious ways Channel 4 has established itself as an integral and important part of the mainstream British broadcasting scene. But to speak the language of Stewart Butterfield, what is Channel 4's brand image? What does the channel stand for? If the reply is that it stands for the programmes it screens – from *Without Walls* to *Brookside* – then its identity is no more than the sum of its parts. This imageless image cannot be the image it wants – or needs – for the difficult times ahead.



Michael Grade:
"I have what the
independents don't
have – access to
airtime"



The liberal conscience abroad: 'A World Apart' with Barbara Hershey

Home movies

Will 'Film on Four' become more exciting under David Aukin's direction, asks Richard Johnson

● People love a scream, a car chase and an excuse to hold the sofa. Even us minorities. But the nearest you'll get to this kind of excitement from a 'Film on Four' will be a thriller about apartheid or the conspiracy of multinational capital. Never just naked tension.

Maybe things will be different under David Aukin, new head of drama at Channel 4. When it came to Aukin's appointment, Michael Grade and Liz Forgan wanted to avoid just swapping executive chairs inside the film world. But their search ended with a man labelled an administrator. A man who has never had anything to do with TV or film. A man who has produced within the subsidised theatre for the last twenty years.

So does this mean, in three years time, that 'Film on Four' will be accepting delivery of a truckload of comedies of manners about middle-class life written by people from the theatre? Not Aukin's style, apparently. The winter issue of *The Producer*

listed the ten films Aukin wished Channel 4 had made. The list runs from 'Dr Strangelove' to 'This Sporting Life' and 'The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie'.

And even the cynics who are worried by Aukin's lack of film background seem encouraged by his lack of TV experience. He's not some plodder who has worked his way up through television before moving into films. "They should try me with everything. And providing it's individual, I'm interested".

So, no formula movies ("that's all Hollywood does, and even they can't manage it"), but maybe a car chase or two. "If you take great paintings, how many pictures of flower pots have all the painters in the world painted? You don't say 'I'm not interested in flower pots' - it's who paints them and how they paint them that's interesting".

The fact that Aukin has only commissioned three films so far is more down to a shortage of decent screenplays than a shortage of funds. To

increase the budget of an individual film Aukin is prepared to put more money into fewer projects if necessary. Talking to him you get the sense that the low-budget commissions will be entrusted to filmmakers who know Alejandro Jodorowsky and understand the art-cinema scene, with the larger budgets given to those who know the popular market.

In the meantime, the BBC is running Channel 4 close in film finance by funding numerous projects, including Anthony Minghella's 'Truly, Madly, Deeply'. The release of 'The Object of Beauty', starring John Malkovich and Andie MacDowell, has been delayed. Eventually it will be the first feature film the BBC has co-produced with an American independent company to get a cinema release before being shown on television.

In the face of such competition Aukin seems comfortable with Channel 4's position. "I welcome the BBC's involvement. If they succeed we will all do well. People will have renewed faith in the film industry".

But what about the fight for customer loyalty as Channel 4 prepares to sell its own air time? "People at home see a good film on television - they're not really thinking 'I was watching one channel or another that particular night'. They're thinking, 'I had a good evening at home - I must have another good evening at home watching another film'. I don't feel threatened by it. But if they see a bad film on the BBC they'll probably go out the following night and won't be available to watch the Channel 4 film".

Not always a bad plan, given that Channel 4 films



David Aukin: not a plodder

often look like old movies by the time they arrive on the screen. Witness the new season, which includes 'The Dressmaker', 'Drowning By Numbers' and 'Hope and Glory'.

Successful 'Film on Four' titles tour the cinema circuit and come out on video before reaching television. The loyalty of the stay-at-home television viewer is being taken for granted - quite reasonably, when we sit and watch the films regardless. The 1990 season attracted average audiences of above three million, with 'Wish You Were Here' reaching 6,670,000 viewers.

"Finally what concerns me is not that a film might pick up an award at a Berlin film festival or be applauded at Monte Carlo, but that these are films that an audience at home will want to switch on and watch. I'm a television executive. If I felt that the best drama could be got in a different way - ie not through the making of films - then I would have to abandon 'Film on Four' and look for television movies, or maybe more '4-Play'. But I still believe that the best drama is made through 'Film on Four' - partly because the most interesting talent wants to work in that medium".

The video drama series '4-Play' was axed at the end of 1990. The plays may have given an opportunity to writers new to television, but 'Film on Four' delivered audiences twice the size. "I cut '4-Play' and left everything else at full strength. Coming from theatre I knew the dangers of cutting everything a bit and trying to keep everything going".

Despite the fact that Channel 4's big-budget series outing, 'The Orchid House' has failed to excite anyone but the costume department, series and serials remain the bread and butter of what people watch. And the first half of the 'Film on Four' season is unlikely to change that. All the more irritating for Aukin, who has to wait a few years before his products reach the screen. Just close your eyes, and dream flower pots.

New 'Film on Four' season

Hope and Glory
John Boorman (21 April)
A World Apart
Chris Menges (28 April)
Drowning By Numbers
Peter Greenaway (5 May)
We Think the World Of You
Colin Gregg (12 May)
Smack and Thistle
Tunde Ikoli (19 May)
The Dressmaker
Jim O'Brien (26 May)
Riff-Raff
Ken Loach (2 June)
'Film on Four' resumes in July



Prospero (John Gielgud), left, the prohibitive father with his daughter, Miranda (Isabel Pascoe). Below, Peter Greenaway: is art worth doing at all?

An arch-manipulator, a murderous revenge tragedy and innovative television technology are the rich mixture in Peter Greenaway's new film, 'Prospero's Books'. Adam Barker talks to the director about projects past, present and future

A tale of two magicians



Flaunting their erudition and relishing their overt staginess, Peter Greenaway's films divide audiences. There are those prepared to entertain his conceits and play the game, and others for whom a Greenaway film is about as exciting as a guided tour through an ancient museum where the catalogue has been lost. What is not in doubt is Greenaway's achievement. Producing a regular stream of low-budget movies, from early shorts such as *H is for House* (1976) to *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989), he has made one of the most challenging bodies of work in post-war British cinema.

In person, Greenaway is a far cry from the malicious manipulator which his work might suggest. Quiet, courteous and amiable, he speaks with practised eloquence. But despite his willingness to expound on the ramifications of his densely packed work – and to admit to its failings – it is hard to avoid feeling that his fluency is ultimately unsatisfactory. When asked to consider the personal roots of

his work, Greenaway is at first unexpectedly reticent, and then skilfully guides the conversation back to safer ground.

This interview was conducted over three days in Greenaway's spartan Hammersmith production offices – more reminiscent of a workshop than a film studio. The setting reflects his artisanal approach to film-making, where as far as possible the money goes on the screen rather than on the extravagant trappings of the film industry.

Greenaway is hard at work editing his new movie in time for Cannes. *Prospero's Books*, as it is known, is a version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* starring John Gielgud. Shakespeare's play centres on Prospero, Duke of Milan, who has been deposed by his brother, Antonio, supported by Alonso, King of Naples, and now lives on an island with his daughter, Miranda. Opening with a storm in which the corrupt brother and his courtiers are shipwrecked on the island through Prospero's magic, *The*

Tempest shows Prospero's staging of an action in which he intends to take his revenge on his usurping brother.

Initially approached by Gielgud, who has cherished the idea of putting the enigmatic drama on screen for some time, Greenaway rapidly transformed the play into his own idiosyncratic vision. The film picks up on a brief mention in the text of 24 books from his library which Prospero is permitted to take into exile. These desert island volumes become an abstract counterpoint to the story, like the number count from one to 100 in *Drowning By Numbers*. While remaining faithful to Shakespeare's text, Greenaway has put the words of all the characters into Prospero's mouth for the first two-thirds of the film.

The results – if the unfinished editing copy I was allowed to see is anything to go by – are fascinating, and sure to polarise viewers of Greenaway's work even more than any of his previous films.

One of the reasons we have called the film *Prospero's Books* rather than *The Tempest* is to indicate to an audience that it is not a straight attempt to reproduce a familiar text. One of my many interests was to pursue the 24 books that Gonzales, Prospero's loyal courtier, supposedly put into the bottom of the leaky vessel in which Prospero was sent out into exile. That idea, I suppose, really holds the material together.

And it seemed quite logical from there to consider *The Tempest* very much as a text, as something written. So what happened in the end is that I made the twenty-fourth book *The Tempest* itself. So the whole film is structured around the idea of Shakespeare/Prospero (Gielgud) sitting in his cell on the island writing the play that you see.

The first word of the play is "Bosun", which is a very interesting word because it is one that is never written down. It was used by seamen who were basically illiterate, so that when they came to write the word down it was "boat-swain". It's a nice opening point about the topsy-turvy use of oral and written language.

So the film opens with Gielgud sitting at his desk experimenting with the word "Bosun", and you see it written up on the screen many times. The evocation of that word in conjunction with the first book of the film, which is the Book of Water, supposedly put together by Leonardo da Vinci, sets the film off. Right at the beginning, then, the audience knows we are at the origins of the play, and I make no attempt at straight illusionism.

At the end of the film the books are all destroyed. What happens, then, is that the apocryphal books – which of course never exist – are created in the first minute and destroyed in the last minute of a two-hour film. They are there *only* for the film, which I think is an intriguing idea.

Following this so far? Good. Because it gets worse. In addition to the labyrinthine complexity of its narrative, *Prospero's Books* is visually the most dense of Greenaway's films, thanks largely to the first extensive

use of high definition television (HDTV) processes for the big screen. HDTV uses twice as many lines as conventional television to achieve better resolution, higher contrast and a wider range of colours. The resulting image – which also has a wide, cinema-like screen ratio – can be manipulated using all the sophisticated techniques of video editing: slow motion, superimposition, and animation.

Shot on 35mm film, *Prospero's Books* is being edited using a combination of conventional film techniques and television post-production. Greenaway has edited three separate versions of the film which run in parallel and will ultimately be mixed together into a single two-hour narrative. He has spent a month in Japan using state-of-the-art HDTV editing facilities provided by the television company NHK. In order to test the potential of the technology, NHK contributed about £2 million worth of editing time free of charge (representing more than the entire production budget of about £1.5 million).

The high definition techniques – also being used by Wim Wenders for his forthcoming road movie *Until the End of the World* – allow Greenaway to unite the sumptuous cinematography evident in *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* with the sophisticated image manipulation of his television production of Dante's *Inferno*. Greenaway is wary of the film being seen as a "technological freak", but believes he has only scratched the surface of the technical possibilities.

Working in conjunction with Tom Phillips on *A TV Dante*, there seemed to be a way through television to engender a whole series of new ways of making pictures, which I was much more familiar with in terms of painting and draughtsmanship than I was with cinema. It was an ability primarily to reorganise the screen ratio, to play with colour in a way you can't in the cinema, and to extend and reshape the elements of the pictorial imagination, which you can do easily in painting. There was a time when I believed that the cinema had an ability to use all the letters of the alphabet and TV could only use the vowels. I don't believe that to be the case any more; I think TV has its own vocabulary, its own alphabet. So what I wanted to do in *Prospero's Books* is to make the

I get great delight out of the manipulation of ideas. I try very hard to put that into cinema

first tentative steps towards an expanded cinema which uses television vocabulary but still hangs on to the cinematic idea of creating images which are bigger, noisier, louder, more engulfing than you are.

It's a terrible admission to make, but I do feel for me that cinema has somehow ceased to be a spectator sport. I get tremendous excitement out of making it rather than out of watching it. I suppose on another level it is like trying to regain those first days of the cinema when the audience rushed out because they thought that the waves coming in were going to wet their feet.

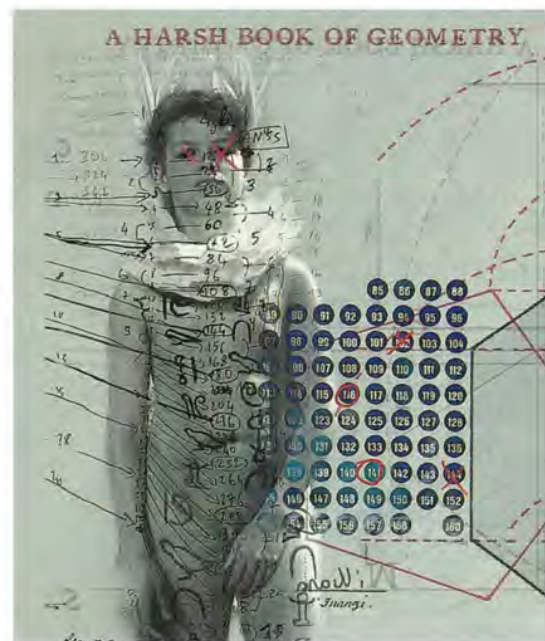
Whatever Greenaway has done, he has been the subject of sceptical enquiry. He began his career as a painter but was always being told that his work was "too literary". As an experimental film-maker in the 70s, his affection for elaborate, elusive story-telling – as seen in *A Walk Through H* – led him into conflict with the prevailing non-narrative approach of structuralist film-makers like Peter Gidal.

With Greenaway's shift into feature films in *The Draughtsman's Contract*, a new worry emerged: was Greenaway interested enough in the conventional concerns of drama – character, events and emotion? Most of the films originate essentially as ideas – not as events, not as pieces of narrative, not as a desire to express a character. I have always admired, even if I cannot emulate, those people who manage to engender their cinema from the ground up – someone like Godard, for example, whose ideas appear in his imagination already as pieces of cinema and then simply have to be realised.

It differs from film to film, but for me the starting-point is a set of ideas – or maybe ideas is too strong, a set of notions. *Belly of an Architect*, for example, came about because I wanted to consider the ideas that were current in Great Britain at that time about the responsibility of the architect. *A Zed and Two Noughts* was initially

'A Harsh Book of Geometry', one of Prospero's 24 desert island volumes, right, is a handbook of the newly emerging science which allowed the mathematical formulation of physical space. Greenaway designed the pages of the book, which were drawn up and transferred on to video tape. They were then manipulated using techniques which can produce almost inexhaustible combinations of words, moving images and colours. Here, the HDTV-processed image brings together the figure of a

'mathematical boy', who wanders Prospero's library, with a computer-generated world of abstract shapes which act as living embodiments of the principles they represent. As Greenaway describes the way the imaginary book would operate: "Complex three-dimensional geometrical diagrams rise up out of the pages like models in a pop-up book. Angles are measured by needle-thin metal pendulums that swing freely, activated by magnets concealed in the thick paper".



a film made to consider how man, the superior species of the world, has subjugated the rest of the animal life to his credo, his attitudes.

A good description of some of my film-making activity is "a conversational dissertation wrapped up in an entertaining narrative form". At the core there are a number of notions and interrelated ideas which need to be discussed, almost in a conversational way. While Greenaway recognises his contemporary isolation in attempting to construct a cinema of ideas, drama and formal self-reflexivity, he draws inspiration from other art forms. His heroes include modernists like the painter R.B. Kitaj and the composer John Cage, but also Jacobean dramatists like Ford and Webster. He is especially drawn to the masque form – the courtly entertainment – where it was not unknown for the king himself to participate in elaborate stage allegories representing the power of the monarch.

Despite the metaphorical message of *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* about the avarice and philistinism of Thatcher's Britain, the film borrowed its dramatic form from Jacobean drama, with Helen Mirren taking final cannibalistic revenge on her brutal gourmet husband. So what is it that draws Greenaway back to the seventeenth century? The masque is basically an elite private enter-

tainment, very much to do with symbols and emblems and allegories. And anybody who has seen my cinema will know that metaphors and allegories fascinate me enormously. The other aspect of Jacobean drama I like is its extraordinary relish for risk-taking. It's very visceral, very corporeal and often plays with extremely taboo subjects like incest, for example in *Tis Pity She's a Whore*. I suppose these things were at the back of my mind when writing *The Cook, The Thief*. And although *The Draughtsman's Contract* is a Restoration drama and not a Jacobean drama, there is a lot of Jacobean concern for that hard edge of morality, sex and violence, which I think gives the film a lot of its tensions. However, *The Tempest*, which begins with some of the thrust of Jacobean revenge drama, doesn't develop in the expected way. Though in Greenaway's hands the darker aspects of the play are predictably foregrounded, what is unusual is that the spirit of conciliation prevails.

The play would certainly seem to start off as a revenge drama, with Prospero in the first five minutes ranting about his past and vowing revenge. But then two-thirds of the way through, almost without prior warning, the situation is broken open completely and there is a moment of truth when Prospero decides to

forgive everybody. We have actually used this as a pivotal moment in the film, and for my purposes I am very happy with that sudden change of heart. But you must not be misled into thinking that this is psycho-drama. It is a drama of conceits and allegories and metaphors, and under these terms a sudden change of heart can no doubt be seen to be relevant to all the other concerns of the play.

Greenaway's films are littered with flawed male protagonists whose arrogance and grandiose artistic schemes are ultimately their undoing – from Anthony Higgins' conceited draughtsman to Brian Dennehy's auto-destructive architect. But Prospero is in many ways the ultimate manipulator – a magus who contrives the whole story. Does he represent a new kind of hero for Greenaway?

There is a deliberate amalgamation or confusion between Shakespeare, Gielgud and Prospero – they are, in effect, the same person. It is Shakespeare's last play, his farewell to illusionism, his farewell to playing games, his farewell to all this anti-naturalism. Gielgud at eighty-seven is obviously near the end of his life, and he has had an incredibly long theatrical career. So in terms of English classical theatre, it is his goodbye to illusionism, to costumes, to dressing up, to playing games. And of course within the confines of the play itself this is exactly what Prospero does – in the famous last speech he actually turns to his audience and begs their forgiveness and abandons his magic before he leaves the stage.

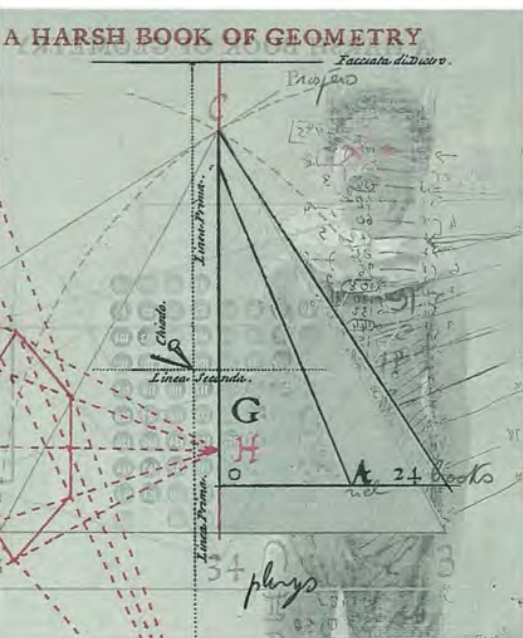
At the same time, I don't think there is any doubt at all that when Gielgud appears in *Prospero's Books* he is an actor. He is giving in some ways a purple performance; he is a virtuoso actor and we allow him that space – this is quite deliberate. There are things about Prospero where you feel that's also true – sometimes when you read the dialogue you can see him looking at himself from the outside as he plays his various roles: patrician statesman, silly old fool, prohibitive father. It is a series of ways of breaking the character down.

Perhaps what most distinguishes *Prospero's Books* ▶

MARC CILLIANT/NOT



In the court of Peter Greenaway: Miranda's mother, Susannah, sits in state in Milan, watched by Prospero's creatures



◀ from Greenaway's previous work is its lack of strong female protagonists. In Shakespeare's play Miranda is the only woman, and she is little more than a child; in 'Prospero's Books', Greenaway may have added Susannah, Miranda's mother, who is seen in a series of flashbacks, but neither of the women enjoys a major active role.

While Greenaway's work has often been accused of misogyny because of the extreme humiliation suffered by women characters in his films – especially the sexual abuse hurled on Helen Mirren in 'The Cook, The Thief' – Greenaway professes an enthusiasm for strong female characters who, more often than not, turn out to be secretly running the show. So how did he deal with Shakespeare's most famous naïf, Miranda, Prospero's daughter, as played by Isabel Pascoe?

For the first third of the play she is no more, I suppose, than the representative of the audience, the device Prospero needs to explain to the audience what the history has been. She makes no contribution to anything herself. I have to admit that in the film we have pushed that tendency even further, because we have made her constantly asleep. And even at the end she still doesn't come over as a particularly strong-minded wench.

But as a pawn, as a cipher, Miranda is essential to the play because she certainly believes,



Working with Tom Phillips on 'A TV Dante', Greenaway is learning television's new vocabulary

There is a lot of Jacobean concern for that hard edge of morality, sex and violence

as I do, in the Darwinian evolution – she is the kingpin, or the queenpin, on which the whole drama peculiarly rests. Ultimately Prospero does get his revenge because he manages to unite the kingdoms of his enemies through the offspring Miranda will no doubt have from her marriage to the son of Alonso, King of Naples. But perhaps Miranda's passivity was finally too much even for Greenaway. He has written a companion novel to the film which imagines the voyage back to Naples after the play is over. Miranda becomes a constant source of irritation to the conventional courtiers around her – partly due to her enduring virginal behaviour, and partly because of the unconventional ideas which have been drummed into her by her father, from anti-clericalism to the dangerous new ideas of scientific reason.

The provocative potential of intellect and divergent thinking is a subject close to Greenaway's heart. The vertiginous array of arcane and erudite references contained within his films is legendary. How does he justify what is, for some, the main obstacle to appreciating his cinema?

I think civilisation has got where it is not by being led by its emotions, but by degrees of rationalisation, in many complex ways. Why can't this be the subject matter and content and structure of film-making? Because of my inclinations, my cultural background, my education and my temperament, I get great delight out of the manipulation of ideas. Some people find it very difficult to understand that the mere discussion of ideas can be fantastically emotionally satisfying. I try very hard to put that into the cinema so that maybe other people can feel it as well.

Despite Greenaway's steadfast defence of the world of ideas, it is precisely this fascination which is so often the downfall of his protagonists. When pressed on this question, the personal reserve dissolves – for a moment. Perhaps I gave myself away most in *Belly of an Architect* about what I have come to believe are

the most sensitive areas – about the validity of art, about whether art is worth doing at all, and if art is worth doing, what sort of art is worth doing more than anything else.

I hadn't realised how personal that film is on lots of different levels – the older I get the more personal I find that movie – about immortality, posterity, the significances of reproduction, both artistic and genetic. I suppose I do feel a certain optimism for art itself. Small pieces of jade from an ancient 5,000-year-old Chinese tomb: we don't understand their political significance, we don't understand their religious significance, but they are able somehow to communicate to us in other ways. There seems to be some clue here, a search for doing something which in a cosmic sense would be totally and absolutely useless, but in a human sense – if we are allotted a certain amount of time on earth – we need to engage with unless we all want to go and commit mass suicide. But if you take the other, more pragmatic view, in a Darwinian sense my purpose on earth is entirely over. I have engendered two daughters, I have passed on the genetic material, so what I do now, between their birth and my death, is just embellishing the nest a little. The spark, that piece of electricity from God to Adam, has passed on, and I am merely engaged – in a cosmic sense – in decoration.

'Prospero's Books' is due to be shown at the Cannes film festival in May and released in Britain later this year. Peter Greenaway is publishing three books in conjunction with the film – the script, a novel called 'Prospero's Creatures', and extracts from the apocryphal books under the title 'Ex Libris Prospero'. His next film project, 'Fifty-Five Men on Horseback', is a love story based on a series of paintings of horses, and he hopes to make another film, using high definition television techniques in conjunction with NHK, based on Tulse Luper, the mysterious ornithologist at the centre of 'A Walk Through H'. He is working on two television documentaries about Mozart and Darwin, preparing a stage version of the opera 'The Death of Webern and Others', and an exhibition of paintings which make up an unfilmable film called 'The Stairs'.

Filmography

Peter Greenaway:
born 1942 in Wales.

Train 5 mins (1966)*
Tree 16 mins (1966)*
Revolution 8 mins (1967)*
Five Postcards from Capital Cities 35 mins (1967)
Intervals 6 1/2 mins (1973)
Erosion 27 mins (1971)*
H is for House 9 mins (1976)
Windows 4 mins (1974)
Water 5 mins (1974)
Water Wrackets 12 mins (1975)
Goole by Numbers 40 mins (1976)*
Dear Phone 17 mins (1976)

1-100 4 mins
A Walk Through H 41 mins (1978)
Vertical Features
Remake 45 mins (1978)
Zandra Rhodes 15 mins (1979)*
The Falls 185 mins (1980)
Act of God 28 mins (1980)
The Draughtsman's Contract 108 mins (1982, a.k.a. Death in the English Garden)
Four American Composers 55 mins each episode (1983)
Making a Splash 25 mins (1984)
A TV Dante – Canto 5 (1984, pilot for the later Cantos series)

[Inside Rooms] – 26 Bathrooms 25 mins (1985)
A Zed and Two Noughts 115 mins (1985)
Belly of an Architect 118 mins (1987)
Fear of Drowning 30 mins (1987)
Drowning by Numbers 119 mins (1988)
A TV Dante – Cantos 1-8 (1988)
Hubertbals Handshake 5 mins (1989)
Death in the Seine 40 mins (1989)
The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover 124 mins (1989)
Prospero's Books (1991)
* Prints unavailable

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Blooded with optimism

What films are showing at a cinema inside you? Just lately I went to Amsterdam, arriving there on the afternoon when the canals froze over and the first snow of the year had turned the toy-town city into a huddle of white-wigged houses. By nightfall, all sensible people had retired indoors away from the intense cold, but I had eaten a good dinner, and blooded with the optimism that brings decided to walk through the Jordaan up to the railway station. Railway stations in the snow seem very romantic to me. How silent it was: the stones and the streets had soaked up the soundlessness of the snow, there were no footsteps. No footsteps and I, a small figure on a bridge looking at other bridges that were empty. "I must be still alive because I can feel the cold." But coldness is the condition of death and death is a white space.

"Have you come for me?" asks Antonius Block to the dark figure hooded against the sea. Thereafter begins a game of chess, the Knight tries to beat Death at his own game, not because he is afraid to die but because for him the big questions have not been answered. With his Squire Jons he is allowed to continue his journey home through a plague-ridden land providing he plays for time. Block is worried about God, or more specifically, the apparent absence of God. God is a lover who never keeps his appointments.

Block is a modern hero, in effect an anti-hero; gentle, disaffected and suffering from the modern disease of a failure of feeling. He is capable of compassion, he is certainly intelligent but he wants to feel something deeply and passionately. In his encounter with Death he hopes at last to live fully, even if it is only for a moment. His expectation is a religious one; if the world is more than a hollow ball it will have God at its centre, the revelation will be grand and solemn. What he discovers, through the unlikely agency of a travelling circus, is the revelatory power of the everyday. For ten years the Knight has fought for God in the Crusades and been rewarded with a terrible emptiness. The large gestures did not answer the large questions. Now, as the daylight declines, he sits for a while eating wild strawberries and drinking fresh milk with Jof the juggler, his wife and their baby. Jof is Bergman's version of a Holy Fool which means that he is intelligent. He has visions, but not the tormented visions of the religious martyrs for whom the



In the first of a series where writers and artists meditate on what film means to them, novelist Jeanette Winterson, author of 'Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit', writes of her fascination with Bergman

Last Day is always upon us, for him and his little family, the First Day is always just beginning; a new start, a new place. The bowl of milk is fresh. The Knight holds the milk brimful in his hands and sees in it a sacrament more profound than body and blood. This is his Communion.

Commonly we associate visions with the apprehension of something not actually there. Bergman's view, consistent from his earliest film, through *The Seventh Seal* to his cinematic swansong *Fanny and Alexander*, repudiates this. For him, being able to see means seeing through the web of the world, including religiosity, seeing past most people's short-sightedness, their celebrated common sense. Squire Jons, the good and practical man lost in empiricism, cannot help his master towards the meaning he desires.

In *Fanny and Alexander* it is not the plain-speaking successful man of the world Gustav-Adolph (for all his delights) who can eventually resolve the family crisis, it is Uncle Isak, also a man of the world but one who knows that magic and good management are natural partners. In his Cabbalistic ménage, where life-size puppets and sinister relics lie head-to-tail with fabulous antiques, there is no separation between art and life, faith and the slop-pot. It is a more sophisticated arrangement than Jof's caravan but the essence is the same. Importantly, both establishments, the one permanent, the other always somewhere else, are fired by a sense of humour. The Knight learns how to laugh.

The stage, the little world, is the space in *The Seventh Seal* and *Fanny and Alexander* where the search for truth (call it God or not) shows up a vital clue. The stage (like the film process itself) is make-believe. Art is not mirroring life but playing with life. This is

no faithful reproduction but jest and gesture. The paradox is that what the actors feign they make us feel. In the theatre the impossible trick is easy; the ball hangs in mid-air, our lives are suspended out of time. Time and space as we know them do not exist. The curtain drops, the ball falls again, our lives move on. This little world, despised by the scourging martyrs in *The Seventh Seal* and the unseeing Bishop in *Fanny and Alexander* is the practical communication of those everyday visions that only a few of us can see without help. The Word made flesh. Bergman's films are all Quest films but the questor always finds that truth (or God) is not to be found in a lofty detachment from the world, the body and other people. Jof's ecstatic tranquillity, Uncle Isak, whose face is a lamp brightly lit, point to the bulging richness of life, or as Hopkins put it, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil." The Knight has never known this but he does sense it that evening in the forest. If God is in the detail, then passion is in the recognition.

These two films, the one in its sharp austerity, the other in its extraordinary colour, continually run together in my head, acting as an antidote to the dreary fabrication of 'real life'. Whereas the church continually offers an escape, a grim make-believe of the worst kind that neither Antonius Block nor the Ekdahls can ultimately accept, art offers not an escape but an alternative. Instead of being alienated and passionless, a people who will grope in the dark for any solid object, we see into the life of things. Once our vision is restored it is not so difficult to find glory in a single moment or to meet Death in his dark hood on a white Amsterdam canal.



Meeting Death in his dark hood: Ingmar Bergman, 'The Seventh Seal'

Lust for lives

Graham McCann

No Guts, No Glory: Conversations with Bette Davis

Whitney Stine, Virgin/W. H. Allen, £12.99, 256pp

Citizen Jane: The Turbulent Life of Jane Fonda

Christopher Andersen, Virgin/W. H. Allen, £14.99, 416pp

The Joker's Wild: The Biography of Jack Nicholson

John Parker, Anaya, £13.99, 224pp

Ava: My Story by Ava Gardner

Bantam/Transworld, £16.99, 315pp

The biographer meets the star for the first time. Much to his relief, she seems eager to put him at his ease: "I bet you haven't had lunch! Let me fix you a cheese sandwich...". She comments favourably on his appearance: "You're beautiful, too!" In sum, she thinks he is really something special: "Well, you're a smashing guy, and you've written a smashing book".

Most biographers wake up at this point, their dream cruelly interrupted by the sound of the alarm clock. But Whitney Stine is wide awake, taking care to record every compliment Bette Davis pays him, and she pays him plenty. Indeed, eventually the inevitable happens and Ms Davis proposes, "Why don't we get married?" Alas, Mr Stine has to disappoint her: "I could not envision Bette Davis tiptoeing into my writing room with a cup of coffee at dawn, or becoming the sort of nurturing partner my career demanded", he sighs.

Whitney Stine's *No Guts, No Glory* is one of the more shameless examples of a Biographer as Hero. It bears comparison with Norman Mailer's *Marilyn*, a Monroe biography chillingly reminiscent of *The Blue Angel*, with Mailer assuming the Emil Jannings role. What begins as curiosity becomes an obsession; he must win her over for himself, and all rivals must be eliminated. In similar vein, Christopher Andersen's account of the life of Jane Fonda, *Citizen Jane*, features jealous-sounding remarks about Roger Vadim ("Tall, bony and hunched, he had a narrow face, a large nose, a weak chin and a mouthful of oversized teeth that combined to give him a somewhat

equine appearance") and Tom Hayden ("a self-aggrandising careerist").

But few biographers are as fortunate in their reception as Whitney Stine. Andersen sees off Fonda's ex-lovers, whereupon, showing a shocking lack of gratitude, she proceeds to move in with Ted Turner. The prevailing problem here is one of unrequited love. Many biographers find their subjects grow cold and unresponsive and so are driven to seek revenge in the bitter critique, the ruthless deconstruction of the legend (as in *film noir*, if he cannot have her, he makes sure no one else will). The proud iconoclasm of such biographers can be therapeutic for some readers, assuaging a sense of unfulfilled hopes and needs with the news that the famous are fakes – to be admired merely means to fool most of the people most of the time. As another star crashes into the gutter, we sigh with relief that they are, after all, just like the rest of us.

Times have certainly changed. There is now a crisis in the economy of fame, with rampant celebrity inflation and a consequent drop in its purchasing power. As the ranks of the famous swell daily, they must also be thinned. Popular biographies, which have contributed to creating the crisis, attempt to meet it by exposing the well known, peeping into their bedrooms and poking under their rugs. But neither the breathlessly credulous nor the unremittingly sceptical approach offers much of real insight; both merely confirm the prejudices of their respective audiences.

Most movie-star biographies are a disappointment – a slavish expression of an empty consensus. Many are largely cannibalisations of earlier writings on the subject, avoiding



Jack Nicholson: a bit of an Aries

serious judgment in favour of servile documentation. Any shard of previously unreported fact embedded in their pages is difficult to extract from the mire of gossip, heresay, confusion and rhetoric.

Of course, the very ephemerality of most biographies guarantees the continuing health of the industry responsible for them. The latest star biography is read in the knowledge that another will soon succeed it, with each new tome supplementing the store of anecdotes and updating the career information (as with buses, after a period without any, several may arrive at once). The final paragraph of *Citizen Jane* muses: "Who is Jane Fonda, really? It is a question generations will debate". The reader might be forgiven for wondering what exactly is the biographer's role, if not to attempt to answer such a question.

These books are like fast food, made to be consumed in one gulp and then forgotten. While their unpretentiousness can be charming, sometimes the simplicity is a substitute for analysis and any short cut to understanding is seized on. Astrology is a particular favourite, with its vision of individuals dependent on forces beyond their control. *The Joker's Wild*, for example, locates the responsibility for Jack Nicholson's behaviour in celestial constellations: "Anyone with a passing knowledge of astrological influences will realise that he was born on the cusp, a Taurus caught in the influence of Aries, which makes him bullish and a bit of a ram". It is doubtful whether this explanation would satisfy Anjelica Huston. Nicholson's biographer, however, has not finished: "Curiously enough, if we add in the Chinese system of horoscopes, he is an ox".

No Guts, No Glory is similarly deterministic: the biographer turns down Bette Davis' proposal of marriage because, he says, "I doubt that two Aries temperaments would survive very long under the same roof". *Ava: My Story* knows what its audience expects: "[Howard Hughes] and I were born on the same day, and if you think that Capricorns fall into the same category, you know what that means". In fact, after an ominous beginning ("Wouldn't it just be my luck to be born a Capricorn?"), Ava Gardner makes the welcome observation that she never "let a little thing like the stars get in my way". It seems that few biographers could say the same.

Typically, the star's career is presented as a *fait accompli*, the life trimmed of all contingency, the child a miniature version of the adult. Thus we are told the story of the schoolboy



Why do we revel in the fall of the stars, those obscure objects of our desire? Bette Davis, top, Jane Fonda, above, and Ava Gardner, right



RONALD GRANT

Jack Nicholson beaming a smile "like the Joker in *Batman*", and of the young Jane Fonda becoming the star she was expected to be. This emphasis on the stars' predestined success undermines any judgment of their achievements. The star was always going to be a star: one can no more praise him or her for it than one can applaud a midget for being short. The star has 'made it': it is a success story, end of story.

If such biographies avoid serious evaluation of their subjects, they compensate by decorating themselves with glittering superlatives. Rather than demonstrate the worthiness of their subjects, they simply announce it. *Citizen Jane* is about "the single most controversial figure Hollywood has ever produced"; *The Joker's Wild* promises "the most controversial actor"; *Ava: My Story* is about "the most irresistible woman in the world". No one's view of the subject is excluded: *The Joker's Wild* manages to combine nervous snipes at "irate women's libbers" with censorious remarks about Jack Nicholson's more eye-catchingly *louche* behaviour. The result is a *Zelig*-like text that says whatever one wishes it to: "One Jack Nicholson performance is usually vastly different to the next - yet retaining the kind of personal stamp that often attracts the criticism: 'Oh, it's just Jack Nicholson playing himself again'".

None of this was what Lytton Strachey had in mind when he described biography as "the most delicate and humane of all the branches of the art of writing". Much has been written about movie stars, yet remarkably little of it shows any real care or compassion - either for the subject or for the reader. The biographers scribble on, with no sign of the star tiptoeing into the writing room. "I've always felt", said Ava Gardner, "that people preferred the myths, and didn't want to hear about the real me at all". How many movie-star biographers would disagree?

Back to the future

Steven Bode

Timeshift: On Video Culture

Sean Cubitt, Comedia/Routledge, £9.99, 224pp

Surrounded as we are by wall-to-wall video, it is strange to recall that it is little more than twenty years since the first, extremely rudimentary Sony equipment arrived on the market and less than ten years since the 'video revolution' of the early 80s. Rather as if

the coming of video had messed with our notions of time (which in many ways, of course, it has), an extraordinary amount seems to have happened during that short period.

As Sean Cubitt describes it in *Timeshift*, it has been twenty years in which "the protean entity video has hurled itself outwards from any centre it might have possessed at origin to lose itself (its selves?) in a hundred simultaneously-pursued tracks". Cubitt's book traces at least some of these diverse strands and asks if they can be gathered together to form the framework of what he calls a "democratic video culture".

But before such a culture can even begin to emerge, Cubitt argues, we need a new definition of literacy, based on how people 'read' the visual media rather than on the model of the written text. Video, with its ability to intervene in and process the media of film and television, offers unique material for such redefinitions. And all the more so since what we describe as video encompasses several different areas, from commercial movies on videocassette or TV shows time-shifted to be watched later to music promos, VHS and Video 8 home movies and video as electronic art. Video is a word that is part of everyday parlance, yet capable of expression in a range of different accents.

There is no faulting Cubitt's erudition in mapping the dimensions of this new kind of literacy - he is able to move with enviable ease from the intricacies of post-modern cultural theory to a hard-nosed analysis of the media industries. Nor are his credentials in any doubt - as one of a small band of British video critics he has written about a gamut of video matters, from the nitty-gritty issues of access and censorship to more rarefied questions of aesthetics. *Timeshift* is brimful of insights and ideas. But Cubitt's cross-cutting, ambulatory style, constantly moving from position to position, can be exacting, particularly for the non-specialist reader.

Time has not smiled kindly on some of the cornerstones of the video culture that Cubitt describes in this book. The UK video workshop sector, in which huge hopes were placed in the mid-80s, was with one or two exceptions in rapid decline even before the start of the 90s. Moreover, the most interesting independent work of the last few years has moved away from the campaigning, community-based ethos of the 80s towards new aesthetic preoccupations opened up by the arrival of new technologies. It is revealing that all the examples of work by ►

◀ UK artists on which Cubitt's analysis is built (Mark Wilcox's *Calling the Shots*, George Barber's early scratch videos, Albany Video's *MsTaken Identities*, among others) are more than four or five years old.

It is also noticeable that apart from some intriguing predictions, there is comparatively little mention in the book of the emerging computer technologies which will in turn subsume video within a meta-medium of electronic information. That said, however, *Timeshift* opens the lid on a boxful of pressing cultural and political questions that need to be addressed now, yet will doubtless persist into our digital, interactive futures and beyond.

American dreamers

Pam Cook

Naked Hollywood: Money, Power and the Movies

Nicolas Kent, BBC Books, £15.99, 256pp

Tinsel Town, Glamour City – the epithets proliferate, fuelling the familiar ambivalence with which the world's most powerful film business is regarded by both disenchanted insiders and curious outsiders like Nicolas Kent. In *Naked Hollywood*, Kent declares himself bent on unearthing the reality behind the glitz. What he turns up, however, is yet another layer of mystique.

Present-day Hollywood is transforming itself into a different kind of beast. Merger mania and takeover fever are part of a transition to the global media conglomerates which will dominate the industry in the twentieth century's closing decade. The amounts of money exchanged are astronomical and rising with mind-boggling rapidity as companies compete to ride the entertainment industry boom. At the same time, internal power structures have adapted to the changing climate, shifting the bases as the stakes rise.

Like all monsters, this giant exerts a powerful fascination. Kent relishes the financial fairy tales in which billion-dollar deals make real money meaningless. He also delights in the coded language used by the members of the close-knit Hollywood family to communicate with each other. And then there are the anecdotes, which reveal a hunger for power and wealth that

turns everything, including people, into commodities and the creative terrain into a bloody battleground.

In the end, however, insider gossip offers a limited voyeuristic pleasure, confirming what we knew, or may have imagined, already. Kent seems to have talked to a fairly limited range of people, with the result that the same names, stories and film titles tend to crop up again and again. Joe Eszterhas' well-documented rift with his agent Michael Ovitz is recounted twice, while Eszterhas' now legendary \$3 million dollar coup for his *Basic Instinct* script recurs no less than four times.

Kent's style is none the less enjoyably readable. His account of the rise to power of the agent, who has almost replaced the old-style studio mogul in the Hollywood oligarchy, with the Big Three challenged by the smaller 'boutique' agencies in the competition for bankable talent, is gripping stuff. And he is generally good on detailing the historical changes which have created new breeds of industry personnel, such as the 'hyphenates' – the writer-producer-directors who package themselves with their project in their bid for 'leverage'.

But the overall picture painted in *Naked Hollywood* has a familiar ring. As hustler-artists tough it out with suits, the real decision-making process, and its consequences for those movies that get made and those that don't, still eludes us. However, as the greatest dream factory of them all testifies, more is to be gained from investing in myth than reality. So – after the book and the TV series – how about *Naked Hollywood – the Movie*?

Mirrors for Europe

John Wyver

European Cinemas, European Societies 1939–1990

Pierre Sorlin, Routledge, £35, 256pp

Pierre Sorlin is interested in the cinema as a historian and sociologist and his book sets out to understand the relationship between the cinema's images and social change. Developing a comparative analysis between films made in Britain, France, Germany and Italy, he considers the presentation in both popular and art films of subjects which include visions of the coming war from the 30s, depictions of war-time resistance, the post-war city, the shifting roles imposed on women and representations of history in the 80s.

The author explicitly rejects reflection theory – the simplistic idea



that films straightforwardly reflect social realities – and his book attempts to develop a more sophisticated framework. He complements his analyses of individual films with welcome discussions of production context and where possible with explorations of distribution patterns and audience response. Despite the acknowledged paucity of historical evidence, he derives a good deal that is of interest from examining box-office charts and admissions totals, together with audience surveys and the limited records of responses by individual cinemagoers. He stresses how the European cinema has had to define itself against Hollywood and analyses the changes prompted by the development of television, which he is rightly cautious about identifying as the sole cause for the decline in cinema-going.

These are all important questions, but Sorlin's answers can be disappointing. Too often the discussions of the relationships between cinema and society collapse back into variations on reflection theory and, with certain exceptions, the treatments of individual films are superficial. There is, for example, a valuable consideration of Antonioni's *L'Eclisse* (*The Eclipse*), which is discussed in terms of the contrasts between the outskirts of Rome, suggesting the soullessness of a new economic order, and the city's still-vital centre, where Vittoria visits her mother in an apartment evocative of the slow death of an old world. But elsewhere, Sorlin's chosen focus proves limiting and unrevealing.

The inadequacies of the book's concerns are illustrated by their application to Godard's *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle* (*Two or Three Things I Know About Her*). Sorlin sees what he calls, albeit in inverted commas, the "message" of the film as something like: "Towns become increasingly humdrum expanses crossed by indifferent drivers and damaged by greedy property developers". Which, even recognising the self-imposed constraints of the approach, is still an impoverished

Riding on the current wave of Hollywood takeover fever, Akio Morita, the chairman of Sony, paid \$3.4 billion for Columbia Pictures



response to a film so centrally concerned with the connections between the city and language and sexuality and meaning.

The most disarming and irritating aspects of *European Cinemas* are its sweeping generalisations and too frequent statements of startling wrong-headedness. "Modify a few boards in the railway station of *Brief Encounter*", Sorlin suggests, "and viewers will be convinced that the story takes place in Germany or Norway or in the USA". Can he be serious? (Sadly, it seems, he is, for he goes on to contrast the film with *A Taste of Honey*, which he considers "would be hard to disguise... as a German film".)

Equally eccentric is the following characterisation: "Godard's films, at least until 1972 (later he was less interested in political debates), were filled with what must be called a trite anti-Americanism". The reduction of the director's complex, ambiguous relationship with the United States to this level is absurd. And how can anyone who has seen anything by Godard from the last two decades fail to recognise his central and continuing engagement with political debates?

Perhaps Godard is simply a blind-spot for Sorlin. But his failure to respond to the director's work suggests a more general short-sightedness about the particular qualities of different cinematic languages. In the closing pages, Sorlin seems to imply that cinematic language is the domain solely of those who, unlike him, wish to develop aesthetic judgments. (Though for all that, the book is studded with evaluative adjectives.) Yet surely the detailed particularities of language, whether in the cinema or elsewhere, are of fundamental importance, not just to critics and theorists, but to historians and social scientists as well.

In search of a rogue

Andy Medhurst

Lethal Innocence: The Cinema of Alexander Mackendrick

Philip Kemp, Methuen, £17.99, 298pp

The reasons for the persistence of auteurist approaches to the cinema are not hard to understand. The idea that the director is solely responsible for a film's meaning is a comforting fantasy, restricting a potentially threatening diversity of interpretation and giving secondary status to other analytical frameworks such as production context, genre, audience or

ideology which might put spanners in the works.

Philip Kemp's account of Alexander Mackendrick's work makes gestures towards the critique of traditional auteur study, assuring us that the phrase "Mackendrick's films" is used only as "shorthand, to avoid cumbersome repetition". However, this disclaimer does not chime with the book's biographical approach, serving instead to reveal Kemp's ambivalence towards the auteur question. Moreover, the information that this particular director worked as a layout artist for an advertising agency or would like to have been a political cartoonist is offered without establishing the relevance of such facts to his *oeuvre*.

For Kemp, Mackendrick fits into the category of the maverick betrayed by the system (the paradigmatic case being Orson Welles). The system in this case is Ealing, and Kemp follows the line elaborated by Charles Barr in 1977 in his pioneering *Ealing Studios* that the cosy teamwork ethic presided over by Michael Balcon was, in the end, too constricting for Mackendrick's rogue talents. But the notion of the tension between maverick and studio is the least convincing part of Barr's study; he excels in unravelling the socio-cultural implications of hitherto disregarded films rather than in his attempt to fabricate Mackendrick and Robert Hamer as auteurs *manqués*.

Kemp's Mackendrick roves through the book as a victim of callous, capitalist misunderstandings. The account of how the director was wooed, bullied and fought over by competing Hollywood powerbrokers is not without anecdotal interest (Cary Grant wanted to play the Jack Hawkins role in a remake of *Mandy*, for example), but its overall effect is to reinforce the opposition between the artist's inalienable right to self-expression and the suspect motives of the money-makers who control the industry.

This romance is disrupted by the existence of *Mandy*, the Mackendrick film that continues to grow most in interest and relevance and the one that Kemp has the most trouble fitting into his authorial narrative. He is manifestly ill at ease with its melodramatic, women's-picture strategies, even though these are largely responsible for the film's poignant insights into the contradictory familial patterns of Britain in the early 50s. Kemp falls back on accusations of "contrivance" and "sentimentality" (standard terms of abuse from critics unsettled by this genre) and tetchy swipes at the acting, all too neatly avoiding the need for a more complex



Mackendrick moves west: from 'The Ladykillers' for Ealing Studios with Peter Sellers and Alec Guinness, top, to 'Sweet Smell of Success' for United Artists with Susan Harrison and Burt Lancaster, above

analysis to unpack *Mandy's* multi-layered richness.

The directorial-monograph style demands that each Mackendrick film be given a chapter to itself, implying an equality of achievement between, for example, *The Man in the White Suit* and *Don't Make Waves*. Kemp's analyses of the Ealing films (*Whisky Galore*, *The Ladykillers*, et al.) add little to Barr's, except for the loyal use of quotations from Mackendrick himself. *Sweet Smell of Success*, made in the US, is predictably hailed as the career high point. Thereafter Kemp spins out the book with accounts of the three remaining films and, a key feature of the maverick-author fairy tale, the unrealised projects that would have been great were it not for the heartless studio bosses.

Batman fanfare

Martin Barker

The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and His Media

Roberta E. Pearson and William Uricchio (eds), Routledge/BFI Publishing, £11.95, 213pp

First thought: the day I can read a book about Batman without a single "Holy Exclamation!", I'll know that ►

◀ we've arrived. Second thought: arrived where?

Here is an excellent book, one which draws on and reflects some of the most interesting current directions in cultural studies – and applies them all to the phenomenon of the Batperson. The impressive range of articles (you really do get a lot for your money) reveals the narrowing gap between American and British work in this area. There is intelligent discussion of the political economy of the mass media, revealing in particular the ways in which the film industry has become dominated by a very few companies and how this can influence the content of films and TV. And there is also close textual analysis, including a very funny essay by Andy Medhurst in which he rescues and defends the camp Batman of the 60s TV series.

The different emphases within the essays allow us to explore the relations between the film and the comics. A history of audience organisation looks at the emergence of organised fandom after 1970 and the ways this enabled the development of the direct sales system for comics, allowing every copy to be sold in advance of publication. This transformed DC and Marvel in the US and, incidentally, is now doing the same for Fleetway in Britain. Then there is an analysis of the ethnography of those watching the 1989 movie – a revealing way of studying how people encounter films or indeed any other mass medium – which nicely shows how different audiences choose their own point of entry. To the irritation of some fans, Jack Nicholson's Joker emerges as the film's paradoxical hero.

The collection as a whole poses some curious questions, especially if we connect points raised separately in different articles. For example, one contribution explores the views of Fredric Wertham, the leading force behind the 50s campaign against crime comics who believed that reading such material could traumatise children, while another looks briefly at the way the motivations of the comics' heroes and villains are explained in terms of traumas which bring about personality changes. Fascinating parallels emerge, perhaps linked with the powerful role that a modified Freudianism played in US thought at that time.

Yet the book seems unsure of who it is for. It is written in two kinds of language – one speaks from inside the pleasures of being a Batman fan; the other is arch and academic. For example, Medhurst, theorising his own pleasure: "If I might be permitted a rather camp comparison, each gener-

ation has its definitive Hamlet, so why not the same for Batman? I'm prepared to admit the validity for some people of the swooping 80s vigilante, so why are they so concerned to trash my 60s camped crusader? Why do they insist so vehemently that Adam West was a faggy aberration...? What are they trying to hide?" And then there is the academic cleverness of Jim Collins, writing of the movie's use of intertextual references to film and TV images: "Whereas the Joker's manipulation of images is a process of deformation, Batman engages in a process of retrieval, drawing from that reservoir of images that constitutes 'the past'. This tension between abduction and retrieval epitomises the conflicting strategies at work in the film, a text which alternately hijacks and 'accesses' the traditional Batman topoi".

This is no new problem, of course. It signals the general difficulty of working with popular culture. On the one hand, there is the pleasure of participation, the delight in our new-found freedom to value the popular and on the other the tendency to retreat with our knowledge into the validating comfort of the institutions.

It seems churlish to greet a good book with such questions. But it is the mixture of important information and understanding about Batman as text, genre, industry and audience, coupled with clumsy and not very helpful theorising, which makes the reader ask: who and what is meant to be changed by this? And I doubt John Fiske's claim that the fans will love it.



Faces of Batman: from the camp crusaders of the 60s TV series, left, to the dark knight of Frank Miller's 80s comic strip, bottom

Shorts

The Chronicle of Western Costume: From the Ancient World to the Late Twentieth Century

John Peacock, Thames and Hudson, £16.95, 224pp

● Lavishly illustrated in colour, a carefully researched history by a former BBC senior costume designer which promises to abolish all mismatches in costume and era (such as the notorious scene in *Zulu* in which an African warrior sports a watch).

Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

Fredric Jameson, Verso, £24.95, 438pp

● A reprint of Jameson's now classic 1984 essay prefaces an attempt by the US Marxist critic to rescue the corrupted term 'post-modernism' and give it a meaningful definition.

No One Here Gets Out Alive

Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugerman, Plexus, £4.99, 400pp

● Twenty years after Jim Morrison's death, the 'definitive biography', first published in 1980, appears in mass-market paperback to coincide with the release of Oliver Stone's movie *The Doors*.

Explorations in Film Theory:

Selected Essays from *Cine-Tracts*

Ron Burnett (ed), Indiana University Press, £10.50, 289pp

● Essays previously published in the US journal *Cine-Tracts* between 1976 and 1983. Contributors include Mary Ann Doane, Linda Williams, Stephen Heath, Raymond Williams and Ben Brewster.

Sexual Anarchy: Gender

and Culture in the *Fin de Siècle*

Elaine Showalter, Bloomsbury, £15.99, 242pp

● A provocative feminist analysis of the key themes and metaphors of the closing decades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, examining literature, art and films from *Apocalypse Now* and *Fatal Attraction* to *Dead Ringers*.

The Unspeakable Crimes of Dr. Petiot

Thomas Maeder, Penguin, £4.99, 302pp

● Maeder's meticulous reconstruction of the true story of wartime mass murderer Dr Marcel Petiot, first published in the US in 1980, is now reprinted in the UK to coincide with the recent release of the French film *Docteur Petiot*, directed by Christian de Chalonge.

The Life and Loves of Grace Kelly

Jane Ellen Wayne, Robson Books, £14.95, 342pp

● Another behind the scenes look at a movie star's life, this one from a seasoned Hollywood watcher and star-biographer whose credits include *Crawford's Men* and *Ava's Men*.

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Wisdom, a
career in comedy



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T.C. Farries and Co. Limited. £14.95.
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Reviews

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The corruptions of performance: Andres Pajares, Carmen Maura

¡Ay, Carmela! (Ay! Carmela)

Certificate
12
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production Companies
Iberoamericana Films
(Madrid)/Ellepi (Rome)
In association with
TVE (Television Española)
Producer
Andrés Vicente Gómez
Production Supervisor
Victor Albarran
Assistant Directors
Salvador Pons
Ina Luder
Arancha Aguirre
Screenplay
Rafael Azcona
Carlos Saura
Based on the play
by José
Sanchis Sinisterra
Director of Photography
José Luis Alcaine
In Colour
Camera Operator
Julio Madurga
Editor
Pablo G. del Amo
Art Director
Rafael Palmero
Special Effects
Reyes Abades
Music
Alejandro Masso
Music performed by
José Hernán Rincón
Ecuador Rubio
Jesús Pinto
Benjamín Torrijo
Teodore Vinagre
Luis Barco
Joaquín Sánchez
Rafael Checa
José Susi
Pascual Villacusa
Choreography
Alberto Portillo
Costume Design
María Luisa Durán
Joaquín Montero
Pablo Espinosa
Wardrobe
Mercedes Sánchez Rán
Make-up
José A. Sánchez
Sound Recordist
Antonio Rodríguez
Sound Re-Recordist
Alfonso Pino
Sound Effects
Luis Castro
Production Assistant
Carmen Martínez
Subtitles
Barry Sibley Screen Services

Cast
Carmen Maura
Carmela
Andrés Pajares
Paulino
Gabino Diego
Gustavete
Maurizio De Razza
Lieutenant Ripamonte
Miguel A. Rellán
Interrogating Lieutenant
Edward Zentara
Polish Officer
Mario De Candia
Bruno
José Sancho
Artillery Captain
Antonio Fuentes
Artillery Subaltern
Mario Martín
Local Boss
Chema Mazo
Mayor
Silvia Casanova
Woman Prisoner
Alfonso Guirao
Peasant Prisoner
Felipe Velez
Republican Doctor
Emilio Del Valle
Corporal Cardoso
Felix Pardo
2nd Soldier CTV
Rafael Díaz
Sentry
Manolo Millán
Corporal
Victor Mendoza
Francisco Ferrer
Gabriel Moreno
Officers

9,245 feet
103 minutes

Subtitles

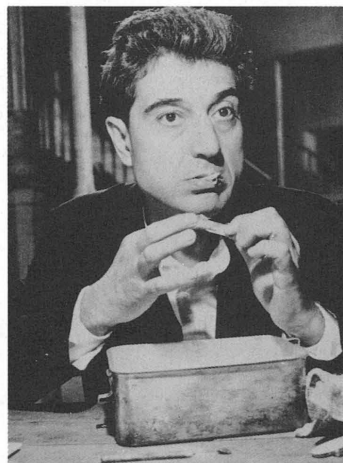
Spain/Italy 1990

Director: Carlos Saura

1938, the Aragonese Front. Paulino and Carmela, a husband and wife team of travelling vaudeville artists – joined by Gustavete, a dumb youth they found starving by the roadside – are entertaining Republican forces with a show dedicated to their cause. After the show, they head for Valencia, but next morning find themselves arrested by fascist troops, having unwittingly crossed enemy lines. They are held, along with other prisoners of war, in a local school, where Carmela befriends a Polish member of the International Brigade (jealously observed by Paulino). They watch the summary execution of a group of prisoners, including the town's mayor.

Summoned by the Italian lieutenant Ripamonte, who has discovered the nature of their profession and is himself a dabbler in the performing arts, they are ordered to mount a show for the troops. Ripamonte will devise some of the material himself and Paulino will rework their old routines. Billeted in the former mayor's house, they improvise costumes and props. The romantic Carmela is aghast when she discovers the extent to which Paulino has 'adapted' their material, and refuses to participate in the final, crudely anti-Republican sketch if the prisoners are to be present. Paulino tries to persuade her with the promise of a church wedding.

With Paulino ill after a meal of what Gustavete insists was cat, and Carmela suffering from premenstrual tension, the show proves an unhappy and fumbled event, interspersed with the requisite fascist salutes. But it is during the final sketch, with Paulino playing Doctor Touchmeup to Carmela's personification of the derided Republican heroine, that the show gets seriously out of hand. Stung by the crude propaganda, the prisoners loudly interject and begin to sing "Ay! Carmela", a Republican ballad.



Little man – Andrés Pajares

Distressed and confused, Carmela joins in only to be silenced by a bullet. As Gustavete ushers Paulino from her graveside, the mute finally regains the ability to speak.

In conception, this must have seemed an ideal project for Italian co-funding, highlighting as it does the Italian-Spanish Fascist alliance (the liberation of Eastern Europe, too, might have lent it a certain topicality). Unfortunately, Carlos Saura's strong suit is not realism, and everything eventually stands or falls by the effectiveness of one grandly rhetorical gesture: Gustavete, the dumb waif, dressed at one point in a hammer-and-sickle vest, finds his voice, after Carmela has been struck down by a fascist bullet, draped as she is at that point in a Republican flag. It is an operatic moment in a film which has exemplified all the flaws one might expect in opera without the music to flesh out its stereotypical characters.

If anything, Saura has underlined the emblematic and symbolic nature of the drama. The lieutenant is every inch the ice-cream commercial Italian, charming to the ladies, quick with a chorus of "O sole mio", and inevitably branded 'fairy' by the other troops. Paulino is the *faux naïf* Chaplinesque 'little man', the realist who collaborates at all costs to save his skin. Carmela's character is equally diagrammatic (indeed her and Paulino's relationship would not be out of place in a silent film). First and last, she embodies incorruptibly idealist sentiments – not for nothing does she share her name with the protagonist of the Republican song – which must speak out. Elsewhere she conforms to the most conventional notions of femininity – using her sexuality to enable Paulino and Gustavete to steal petrol, flirting with the Pole, craving a 'proper' wedding.

If performers can be corrupted through collaboration, so can performances, and Saura shows the vaudevillians' erstwhile vitality and authenticity becoming stilted and ridiculous. Verses fail to rhyme; Paulino fumbles with his notes; and the 'honest' vulgarity of his farted sounding of the retreat gives way, when he performs behind fascist lines, to the 'false' lewdness of the doctor sketch. But what we are left with is less a functioning parable on the theme of popular resistance, than a spectacle in which a series of well-thumbed sketches are run through an all-too-familiar set of moves. Hollywood can profitably exploit both the ethic of the 'deal' and the language of genre and cliché in producing popular cinema. The strengths of European cinema lie elsewhere, and Saura here proves the point by default.

Verina Glaessner

The Bonfire of the Vanities

Certificate
15
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Warner Bros
Executive Producers
Peter Guber
Jon Peters
Producer
Brian De Palma
Co-producer
Fred Caruso
Associate Producer
Monica Goldstein
Production Office
Co-ordinator
Elizabeth Nevin
Unit Production Managers
Robert Anderson
Peter A. Runfola
Location Managers
Brett Botula
F. Stanley Pearce Jr
2nd Unit Director
Eric Schwab
Casting
Lynn Stalmaster
Associate:
Michael Orloff
Extras:
Todd Thaler
Judy Fixler
Jimmie Jue
Assistant Directors
Chris Soldo
Richard Patrick
Douglas Ornstein
Jeff Okabayashi
Screenplay
Michael Cristofer
Based on the novel by
Tom Wolfe
Director of Photography
Vilmos Zsigmond
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Doug Ryan
Steadicam Operators
Larry McConkey
Randy Nolen
Jeff Mart
Process
Photography
Hansard
Editors
David Ray
Bill Pankow
Production Designer
Richard Sylbert
Art Directors
Peter Lansdown Smith
Greg Bolton
Set Designers
Richard Berger
Robert Maddy
Nick Navarro
Set Decorators
Joe Mitchell
Justin Scoppa
Scenic Artist
William Lukek
Special Effects
Eddie Drohan
William B. Doane
Music
Dave Grusin
Music Extracts
"Emperor Waltzes" by
Johann Strauss Jr;
"Don Giovanni",
"Serenade in G (Eine
kleine Nachtmusik)"
by Wolfgang Amadeus
Mozart
Orchestrations
Jack Hayes
Music Editor
Bunny Andrews
Editorial Music
Consultant
Else Blangsted
Songs
"Pennies from
Heaven" by John
Burke, Arthur
Johnston; "Am I Living
in Vain?" by E. Twinky
Clark; "Let Jesus Fix It
for You" by Milton
Biggum; "The Storm
Is Passing Over" by
Herbert Robinson;
"That's Life" by Dean
Kay, Kelly Gordon



The voice - Bruce Willis

Costume Design
Ann Roth
Wardrobe
Men:
Bruce Erickson
Women:
Donna M. Maloney
Bruce Willis:
Charles Mecuri
Make-up
Dan Striepeke
Leonard Engelman
Coree Lee
Bruce Willis:
Scott Eddo
Special Effects
Make-up
Thomas R. Burman
Bari Dreiband-
Burman
Title Design
R/Greenberg
Associates
Supervising Sound
Editor
Maurice Schell
Sound Editors
Richard P. Cirincione
Lou Cerborino
Mark Rathaus
Harry Peck Bolles
Laura Civiello
Stan Bochner
Magdaline Volaitis
Supervising ADR
Editor
Harriet Fidlow Winn
ADR Editors
Marjorie Deutsch
Jane McCulley
Jeffrey Stern
Foley Editors
Bruce Kitzmeyer
Ahmad Shirazi
Sound Recordists
James Tanenbaum
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Andy Nelson
Steve Pederson
Don Digirolamo
Courtroom Adviser
Steven Danow

Stunt Co-ordinators
Gary Hymes
Phil Neilson
Animal Trainer
Gary Gero
Cast
Tom Hanks
Sherman McCoy
Bruce Willis
Peter Fallow
Melanie Griffith
Maria Ruskin
Kim Cattrall
Judy McCoy
Saul Rubinek
Jed Kramer
Morgan Freeman
Judge White
F. Murray Abraham
Abe Weiss
John Hancock
Reverend Bacon
Kevin Dunn
Tom Killian
Clifton James
Albert Fox
Louis Giambalvo
Ray Andruitti
Barton Heyman
Detective Martin
Norman Parker
Detective Goldberg
Donald Moffat
Mr McCoy
Alan King
Arthur Ruskin
Beth Broderick
Caroline Heftshank
Kurt Fuller
Pollard Browning
Adam LeFevre
Rawlie Thorpe
Richard Libertini
Ed Rifkin
André Gregory
Aubrey Buffing
Mary Alice
Annie Lamb
Robert Stephens
Sir Gerald Moore
Marjorie Monaghan
Evelyn Moore
Rita Wilson
PR Woman

Kirsten Dunst
Campbell McCoy
Troy Windbush
Roland Auburn
Patrick Malone
Henry Lamb
Emmanuel Xuereb
Filippo Chirazzi
Scotty Bloch
Sally Rawthrote
Hansford Rowe
Leon Bavardage
Elizabeth Owens
Inez Bavardage
Malachy McCourt
Tony
John Bentley
Bill
William Clark
Eddie
Jeff Brooks
T.J. Coan
Don McManus
James Lally
Marcia Mitzman
Bondsman
William Woodson
Gene Lopwitz
Voice-over
Nelson Vasquez
Pimp
Fanni Green
Prostitute
Roy Milton Davis
Latino
Shiek Mahmud-Bey
Lockwood
Stewart J. Zully
Court Clerk
Helen Stenborg
Mrs McCoy
Timothy Jenkins
Billy Cortez
Sam Jenkins
Fox's Assistant
Vito D'Ambrosio
Intercom Man
Paul Bates
Buck
Camryn Manheim
J.D. Wyatt
Edye Byrde
David Lipman
George Merritt
Poe Picketers

Kirk Taylor
Aide
O. Laron Clark
Cecil Hayden
Louis P. Leiberz
"The Commandatori"
Walker Joyce
Bobby Shaflett/
"Don Giovanni"
Anatoly Davydov
Boris Karlevskov
Nancy McDonald
Ray Iannicelli
Daniel Hagen
Kimberleigh Aarn
Walter Flanagan
Mike Hodge
Ernestine Jackson
Nicholas Levitin
Novella Nelson
Noble Lee Lester
Media Jackals
Adina Winston
Female Guest
Richard Belzer
TV Producer
Cynthia Mason
Maid
Ermal Williamson
Butler
W.M. Hunt
Nunnally Voyd
Gian-Carlo
Scandiuzzi
Maître d'
Jon Rashad Kamal
French Waiter
Channing Chase
Shocked Woman
Hal Englund
Joy Claussen
John Fink
Judith Burke
French Restaurant
Patrons
Barry Michlin
Funeral Director
Connie Sawyer
Ruskin Family
Member
Johnny Crear
Manny Leerman
Sherri Paysinger
Anchorwoman

11,276 feet
125 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Brian De Palma

At a New York literary gathering to celebrate his prize-winning book, *The Real McCoy: The Forgotten Lamb*, author Peter Fallow recalls the events that led to the book, beginning with Wall Street bond trader Sherman McCoy's ill-fated attempt to pick up his mistress, Maria Ruskin, at the airport. Distracted by her, he misses his exit and winds up in The Bronx. Trying to find the way back to Manhattan, Sherman encounters two young black men who threaten him. He fights them off and flees to the car, where Maria has taken the wheel. During their escape, one of the muggers is accidentally knocked down. They return to Maria's apartment and, aroused by their narrow escape, make love.

In the Bronx Criminal courts, Assistant District Attorney Jed Kramer is berated by Judge White, who warns that he will not be used in the quest for "The Great White Defendant", an electioneering ploy of Kramer's boss, District Attorney Abe Weiss. Outside, Kramer is accosted by policemen, who are being pressured to investigate the hit-and-run by the Reverend Bacon, a community leader with an uncanny gift for attracting media attention. In a Manhattan restaurant, Peter Fallow, a drunken has-been reporter, meets his boss, and assures him that he is working on a (non-existent) big story. The next morning, Fallow receives a tip-off about the hit-and-run incident, and senses his grand chance in a story bringing together the disparate worlds of Park Avenue and the Bronx, Wall Street and the New York criminal justice system.

When visited by police officers who are tracing the fragmentary licence plate number which is their only lead, McCoy acts nervous enough to arouse their suspicions and they decide to arrest him. The night before, McCoy and his wife attend the opera (*Don Giovanni*) and a large party, where he meets AIDS-stricken poet Aubrey Buffing, who expresses his admiration for the Don's unrepentant attitudes. The next morning, Sherman is arrested and dragged through a media circus, despite the guarantees given to his attorney that his case would be handled discreetly. Released on bail, Sherman escapes into the street where he is befriended by Fallow, unaware of the latter's identity. His last remarks to Fallow are that he wasn't even driving the car. Sherman returns home to find that his wife has not interrupted their planned dinner party, where he is applauded for his momentary celebrity, discovers that his wife is leaving him after the party, learns that he has lost

his job and contemplates taking his own life, choosing instead to drive the guests from his house with a shotgun.

Having acquired a surreptitious recording of Sherman and Maria's conversation in her apartment, in which she admits to having driven the car, Fallow sends the tape to Sherman's lawyer, Tom Killian. A bug is planted on Sherman for his next meeting with Maria, at her husband's funeral. But she is evasive and then outraged when she discovers that Sherman is wired, and readily agrees to testify in exactly the way that Kramer has requested. At the trial, she swears that Sherman was driving the car and refused to stop. Sherman then disrupts proceedings by playing the tape, and swears that he made the recording (thus making it admissible evidence in a New York court). The charges are dismissed by Judge White, much to the dismay of the enraged audience in the courtroom. The judge then makes a speech about decency, and Sherman leaves, a free man. At the literary gathering, Fallow again enunciates the moral of these events, "What does it profit a man to gain the world if he loses his soul...?"

quite catches up with itself. Within the limitless pages of a novel, Tom Wolfe could do the fine detailing that made the story jump off the page, could fill in the characters and talk about the mood of the city. From the heights of Park Avenue to the depths of the South Bronx, Wolfe's *Bonfire* is a plague-on-all-your-houses extravaganza of Olympian disdain. None of the three central characters – bond broker and "Master of the Universe" Sherman McCoy, assistant district attorney Jed Kramer and alcoholic British journalist Peter Fallow – is especially likeable, and Wolfe's omniscient narrator gnaws on their weaknesses and insecurities. The novel also has something to offend everybody, and one of its themes seems to be the impossibility of nobility in an age where young men from good families go "baying for money" on Wall Street.

Nothing but its popularity dictated that it should be made into a film, and one can imagine the terrified story conferences when the producers realised that for the film to make any sense, it would need to be four hours long. (If it had been made as a mini-series, it would have been better – at least it might have had space to breathe.) One can well imagine how Brian De Palma, the chilliest of mainstream American

directors, could have brought the right kind of sensibility to such a project, but *The Bonfire of the Vanities* has botched virtually all its opportunities. Playwright Michael Cristofer (and who knows how many intervening hands) has created an inoffensive script, and to counter even further the apocalyptic/pessimistic mood of the material, every major role has been radically miscast. As Sherman, the arrogant bond trader whose world collapses when he flees a hit-and-run accident in the South Bronx, Tom Hanks is like a vague, disgruntled puppy. As his mistress, Maria, Melanie Griffith has a bad Southern accent and is irritating rather than unsympathetic. Perhaps worst of all, Bruce Willis has been cast as Peter Fallow, the character closest to Wolfe in his dandyish distaste for the milieu.

His voice – which the film-makers have said they wanted to retain – should come from a great height. But Willis is an amiable lug, and his is utterly the wrong voice to serve as *raisonneur* for this voyage through the urban inferno, as if William Bendix had been cast as Virgil in an adaptation of Dante's *Inferno*.

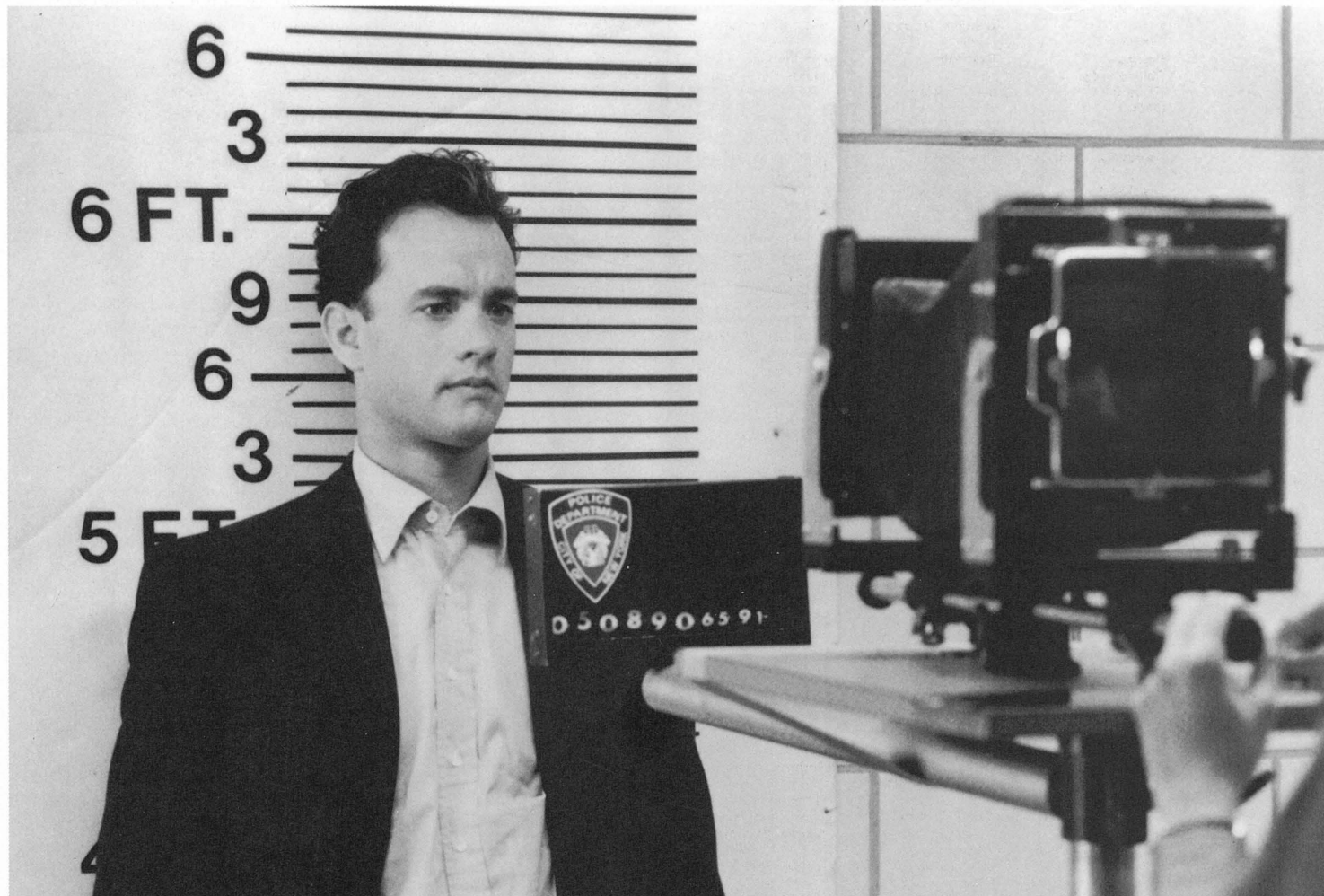
Even worse, De Palma's urges toward grand and startling geometric compositions, swooping

camera movements and a feeling for micro-macro contrasts that rivals David Lean and Stanley Kubrick, seem pasted on to the film. There is no coherent visual plan (again, there were rumours of recutting up to the last possible moment), and apart from a handful of brilliant strokes – the long opening shot that tracks Fallow through a hotel basement, up an elevator into the kitchen, out into the lobby, up another elevator and into the party – the effects have no organic connection with the material. Some of them, like the fish-eye lenses used to identify the film's villains, are grotesque and unworthy.

The happy ending and Judge White's speech about decency are an insult to the source novel and to the intelligence of the audience. They betray the fact that Warner Bros and Guber and Peters wanted the prestige of Wolfe's best-selling novel without paying the price of its vitriol. It is a tame piece of work, the filmic equivalent of printing the news from tabloid newspapers on leatherbound vellum. The film's sole virtue is the array of flamboyant supporting performances – Morgan Freeman, F. Murray Abraham, Clifton James, André Gregory – but they are gargoyles on a structurally unsound Notre Dame.

John Harkness

● *The Bonfire of the Vanities* is a film with so much plot that it never



The master measured – Tom Hanks

The Company of Strangers



Surprises: Cissy Meddings, Alice Diabo

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Electric Pictures/
Contemporary

Production Company

National Film Board
of Canada

Executive Producers

Colin Neale
Rina Fraticelli
Peter Katadotis

Producer

David Wilson

Associate Producer

Sally Bochner

Location Research

Michel Dandavino

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Grace Avrith

Associate Director

Gloria Demers

Assistant Director

François Gingras

Screenplay

Gloria Demers

Cynthia Scott

David Wilson

Sally Bochner

Director of Photography

David de Volpi

Camera Operators

David De Volpi

Roger Martin

Additional:

André Luc Dupont

In Colour

Editor

David Wilson

Scenic Artist

Christiane Gagnon

Music/Music Director

Marie Bernard

Music Extracts

"L'Enfant et les
Sortilèges" by Maurice

Ravel; "Clarinet Trio
in B Flat" by Ludwig

van Beethoven;

"Concerto for Oboe
and Strings in C

Major" by Domenico

Cimarosa; "String
Quartet in C Major,

D956 Opus 163

Adagio", "Sonata in A

Minor D82,

"Arpeggione" Adagio",

"Adagio in E Flat

"Notturmo", D897 Opus

148" by Franz

Schubert; "Nocturne

No.20 in C Sharp

Minor", "Nocturne

No.13 in C Minor,

Opus 48 No.1" by

Frederic Chopin

Music Performed by

Piano: Lorraine Prieur

Arthur Roberts

Marie Bernard

Violin: Denise Lupien

Olga Razenhofer

Florence Mallette

Cello: Guy Fouquet

Christopher Best

Patrick Binford

Viola: Francine

Bang Lupien

Clarinet/Saxophone/
Flute: Nicholas Ayoub

Trumpet: Roger Walls

Double-bass:

Michel Donato

Guitar: Richard Ring

Drums:

François Gauthier

Music Arrangements

Marie Bernard

Songs

"Let Me Call You

Sweetheart" by

L. Friedman,

B. Whitson; "Alice

Blue Gown" by

J. McCarthy,

H. Tierney; "A Mighty

Fortress", "Jesu, Joy

of Man's Desiring" by

Johann Sebastian

Bach; "How Long the

Blues" by Leroy Carr;

"Really the Blues" by

Milton Mezzrow;

"I Ain't Gonna Give

Nobody None of This

Jelly Roll" by

C. Williams,

S. Williams; "In the

Mood" by A. Razaf,

Joe Garland; "It's a

Sin To Tell a Lie" by

B. Mayhew

Costume Design

Elaine Langlais

Titles

Val Teodori

Sound Editor

André Galbrand

Danuta Klis

Sound Recordists

Jacques Drouin

Music:

Paul Pagé

Louis Hone

Ambroise Dufresne

Dolby stereo

Foley Recordist

Louis Hone

Sound Re-recordists

Hans Peter Strobl

Adrian Croll

Foley Artist

Andy Malcolm

Consultants

John N. Smith

Denis Boucher

Production Assistants

Alison Burns

Pierre Pouliot

Laura Oliva

Patrick Loiseau

Cast

Alice Diabo

Alice

Constance Garneau

Constance

Winifred Holden

Winnie

Cissy Meddings

Cissy

Mary Meigs

Mary

Catherine Roche

Catherine

Michelle Sweeney

Michelle

Beth Webber

Beth

9,070 feet

101 minutes

Canada 1990

Director: Cynthia Scott

When their tour bus breaks down, seven elderly women are stranded in the Laurentian region of Québec. Their driver, Michelle, falls and sprains her ankle. Catherine, a lay nun, volunteers to try to repair the bus and Beth, who doesn't really like the countryside, keeps her company while the rest of the group establish a makeshift camp in a nearby deserted farmhouse. That evening, they divide up the remains of their picnic lunches and settle down for an uncomfortable night on pallets of straw.

During the next few days, the women catch and eat frogs and fish from the nearby lake, and reminisce about their lives. In the evenings they play cards, and during the day they walk by the lake and doze in the sunshine. Catherine, who has failed to mend the bus, sets off at dawn to walk the twenty miles to the nearest settlement. She returns with help, and the women depart for civilisation, their shared experience having brought them closer together.

One could imagine a Hollywood version of *The Company of Strangers*, in which the cast would include several well-known stars, most of whom would not be old themselves, and in which there would undoubtedly be a male character acting as a catalyst for the action. The women would have to overcome life-threatening situations and one of them would certainly die. Cynthia Scott's film, however, takes a different, more contemplative approach to the trials and tribulations of old age. This is her first feature, her previous credits in dance documentary including the Oscar-winning *Flamenco* at 5:15.

Although the traits of national cinema are difficult to define, Scott has made a distinctively Canadian movie. It comes out of the National Film Board of Canada's Alternative Drama programme, which is responsible for such issue-based films as Giles Walker's *90 Days* and John Smith's *Sitting in Limbo*. *The Company of Strangers* has its roots in the Griersonian tradition of the NFB. It's a mix of fact and fiction - NFB house

style *par excellence* - with much of the film's effectiveness deriving from the intimacy of 'fly-on-the-wall' documentary techniques.

From the moment the women first come into view through the haze of a summer's day, gingerly making their way across a grassy ridge, their advanced age is evident. Scott's achievement is to take this for granted, refusing to offer stereotypical portraits. She endows her characters with convincing authenticity by weaving real stories and real people into the fictional setting. Using non-actors, and with only the barest of scripts, the director has captured the drama of old age in a film which is both moving and funny, but never sentimental.

The drama emerges from moments of genuine revelation, as when Mary confides to the down-to-earth Cissy that she is a lesbian. One holds one's breath until Cissy, with her unfailing good humour, declares "Well, that's good then, isn't it?" Similarly, when Michelle persuades Beth to take off her wig, the camera lingers on a clearly self-conscious Beth. "I'm eighty, you know", she informs Michelle, "but I may still surprise you". And with a small gesture of defiance, she removes the wig and pats down her hair, exposing her extreme vulnerability. "It's beautiful", Michelle murmurs, gently defusing the tension.

As the women divulge their pasts in casual conversation, glimpses of their lives as younger women, daughters, wives and mothers are offered through montages of family photographs. The bright, hopeful faces in the snapshots contrast with their present state, the loneliness of widowhood. But in one humorous scene, Beth, Winnie and Alice, talking about their first loves, all agree that the right man could still come along. The switch from nostalgia to hope for a desire-filled future is a challenge to the conventional idea of old age in which 'the end' is approached with equanimity. When Constance weeps at her approaching death, there is nothing the other women can say. Scott records the painful process of coming to terms with mortality entirely without mawkishness.

Jill McGreal



Revelation, recollection and hope for the future

Certificate
18
Distributor
UIP
Production Companies
MGM/Pathé
Entertainment, Inc
Producer
Mark DiSalle
Associate Producer
Andrew G. La Marca
Production Co-ordinator
Valerie Micklaelian
Kucera
Unit Production Manager
John Burrows
Location Manager
Terry Gusto
Casting
Cathy Henderson
Michael Cutler
Extra Casting
Superior Casting
Assistant Director
Chase Newhart
David Kelley
Screenplay
David S. Goyer
Director of Photography
Russell Carpenter
Colour
DeLuxe
Assistant Camera
Mark R. Jackson
Scott Herring
Steadicam Operator
Elizabeth Ziegler
Editors
G. Gregg McLaughlin
John A. Barton
Production Designer
Curtis Schnell
Art Director
Robert E. Lee
Set Decorator
Richard Hummel
Set Dressers
Gene Cane
Julie Blakkolb
Marc MacYoung
Scenic Painter
Jay Koiwai
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Gregory C. Landerer, Inc
Pyrotechnic Effects
Tony Cecere
Music
Gary Chang
Music Supervisor
Joachim H. Hansch
Music Editors
Sherry Whitfield
Bill Black
Song
"Bring Me a Dream"
by Gary Chang,
Martha Davis,
performed by Craig Thomas
Costume Design
Joseph Porro
Wardrobe Supervisor
Sanja Milkovic Hays
Make-up
Nina Kraft
Make-up Effects
Lance Anderson
Titles/Opticals
VCE, Inc

Sound Editor
Mike Le-Mare
Foley Editor
Karola Storr
Sound Recordists
Tina Canney
David Cunningham
ADR/Foley Recordist
Dean St John
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Patrick Cyconne Jnr
Frank A. Montano Jnr
ADR Mixer
Tommy Goodwin
Sound Effects Editor
Anthony Palk
Foley Artists
John Post
Nancy Parker
Stunt Co-ordinator
Jeff Imada
Pyrotechnic Stunts
Shane Dixon
Lee Waddell
Stunt Players
Gary Baxley
Kurt Bryant
Phil Chong
Carl Ciarfalo
Gil Combs
Kenny Endoso
Gary Epper
Hank Hooker
Gene Lebell
Danny Lee
Branscombe
Richmond
Ronnie Rondell
Mike Runyard
John Sherrod
Mike Vendrell

Cast
Jean-Claude Van Damme
Louis Burke
Robert Guillaume
Hawkins
Cynthia Gibb
Amanda Beckett
George Dickerson
Tom Vogler
Art Laffleur
Sergeant DeGraf
Patrick Kilpatrick
Naylor "The Sandman"
Joshua Miller
Douglas Tisdale
Hank Woessner
Romaker
George Jenesky
Konefke
Jack Bannon
Ben Keane
Abdul Salaam
El Razzac
Priest
Armin Shimerman
Dr. Gottesman
John Lantz
Sam Waldon
Hans Howes
Keller
Harry Waters Jnr
Jersey
Dorothy Dells
Helen Vogler
Paulo Tocha
Perez
Carlease Burke
Sergeant Waters
Kamel Krifa
Keel
Al Leong
Bruce
David Erskine
Carlos Cervantes
C. E. Grimes
Inmates
Nick Gambella
Desk Guard
Robert Winley
Tall Convict
Danny Weselis
Scraggly Youth
Rick Allan
George Kmeck
Guards
James Hardie
Record Room Guard
John DeBello
Gerry Black
Officers
Mark DeSalle
Con Food Server
Richard Duran
Tommy Rosales
Punks

8,027 feet
89 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Deran Sarafian

Detective Louis Burke, an undercover agent with the Canadian Mounted Police, has just apprehended a psychopathic killer known as "The Sandman" in Los Angeles. Attorney Tom Vogler then assigns him the job of discovering who is responsible for the recent deaths of nine prisoners in Harrison Penitentiary. His outside contact is to be Amanda Beckett, an employee of Tom's, newly graduated from law at Stanford, who will pose as Burke's wife. Delivered to the prison, Burke is intimidated by the sadistic Sergeant DeGraf, but rapidly earns the respect of his brutal cellmate. He becomes known as a trouble-maker when he intervenes in a fight between black and white prisoners, siding with the black Hawkins.

On her visits, Amanda brings him information about the victims - who were all killed in the same way - and money to pay his informants. The convicts' leader, Priest, enables Burke to keep in telephone contact with Amanda, and with Hawkins' help he goes through the victims' files, in which he discovers a two-letter code linking them. Amanda passes this on to a teenage computer buff, who breaks into the prison's computer system to discover a record of the victims' tissue types. DeGraf has meanwhile broken Burke's cover and his cellmate is garrotted. Burke narrowly escapes with his life. Further investigations reveal the dubious credentials of the prison doctor and a human heart amid the infirmary's medical waste. The phone number of the doctor's outside contact turns out to belong to Vogler. Confronted by Amanda, the latter holds her at gun point, admitting

that he was driven to killing the first prisoner by the need to find a suitable liver donor for his dying wife. Thereafter money was the motive. With the fortuitous arrival of Vogler's wife, Amanda escapes.

When The Sandman is moved into Harrison, Burke becomes a doubly marked man. He provokes a riot as a way of escaping DeGraf, who has only narrowly missed killing him, and is helped by Hawkins. DeGraf is killed by Priest, who is himself killed by The Sandman. Despite being stunned in the ensuing fight, Burke propels The Sandman into a furnace. When he emerges, his clothes ablaze, Burke kills him by nailing him to a protruding bolt. As Amanda arrives, and police race to the scene, Burke rescues Hawkins.

Jean-Claude Van Damme's film function most successfully when he is allowed to play the somewhat ingenuous outsider whose sense of moral outrage is fuelled by injustice and the plight of the underdog. The well-spring of his actions is not the search for knowledge - with all that implies of doubt, however residual - but certainty embodied in his implacable fight routines. *Death Warrant's* script, with its credulity-taxing plot indicting corruption in (fairly) high places, therefore appears largely redundant and unavoidably lifeless. Van Damme doggedly persists in doing what he does best, muscling in on a series of well-nigh motiveless conflicts, climaxing in that with his mythically evil antagonist, The Sandman. Director Deran Sarafian and his cinematographer intermittently capture the oppressiveness of prison life with a conviction unusual in such a routine piece.

Verina Glaessner



Out for the underdog: Jean-Claude Van Damme

Delta Force 2

Certificate
18
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
Cannon
Producers
Yoram Globus
Christopher Pearce
Associate Producers
Avi Kleinberger
Michael Hartman
Executive in Charge of Production
Los Angeles:
Allan Greenblatt
Production Supervisors
Philippines:
Clive Challis
Los Angeles:
Leena Deneroff
Production Co-ordinator
Los Angeles:
Brian Damsky
Unit Production Manager
Dean O'Brian
Post-production Supervisor:
Michael Alden
Co-ordinator:
Lesly Michals
2nd Unit Director
Dean Ferrandini
Casting
Jeremy Zimmerman
Consultant:
Nancy Lara-Hansch
Voice: Burton Sharp
Assistant Directors
Leonid Zisman
Robert Roda
Screenplay
Lee Reynolds
Based on characters created by James Bruner, Menahem Golan
Director of Photography
João Fernandes
In Colour
Editors
Michael J. Duthie
Daniel Candib
Additional:
Ken Bornstein
Toto Natividad
Production Designer
Ladislav Wilhelm
Storyboard Artist
Len Morganti
Music
Frederic Talgorn
Music Performed by
Orchestre Symphonique d'Europe
Music Producer
Jacques Fiorentino for LH-81 Entertainment
Music Supervisor
Joachim H. Hansch
Music Editor
Lisa Kauppi
Music Production Co-ordinators
France:
Hanafi Lambez
US:
Lynne Gallop
Costume Design
Kady Dover
Make-up
Key:
Les Nielsen
Chuck Norris:
Ilona Bobak
Supervising Sound Editor
Tony Garber
Synthesizer Programmer
Jeff Morrow

Sound Editors
Thierry J. Couturier
Peter Tomaszewicz
Richard Burton
Kini Kay
Bernard Weiser
Howard Gindoff
ADR Editors
Godfrey Marks
Linda Folk
Michael Magill
Foley Editor
Kurt Nicholas
Forslager
Sound Recordists
Paul Le Mare
Tina Canny
David Cunningham
ADR/Foley Recordist
Tommy Goodwin
Dolby Stereo
Sound Re-Recordists
Philippe Lafont
Patrick Cycone Jnr
Frank A. Montano Jnr
Bob Thirlwell
Sound Effects Editor
Bill Van Daalen
Foley Artists
Laura Macias
Paige Nan Pollack
Fight Choreographer
Rick Prieto
Stunt Co-ordinator
Dean Ferrandini
Stunts
Kurek Ashley
Hank Baumert
Gary Baxley
Nils Cruz
Dan Furnad
Kennie Gibson
Andy Gill
Jeff Habberstad
Red Horton
Howard Jackson
Al Jones
Rob King
Steve Lambert
Peter Lindsay
Eric Mansker
Keefe Millard
Joe Murphy
Eric Norris
Brad Orrison
Mark Orrison
Jimmy Ortega
Don Pike
Tom Sanders
Jan Schultz
John Sistruck
Charlie Skeen
Brian Smrz
Steve Solo
Dick Warlock
Aerial Co-ordinator
Jeff Habberstad

Cast
Chuck Norris
Colonel Scott McCoy
Billy Drago
Ramon Cota
John P. Ryan
General Taylor
Richard Jaeckel
John Page
Begonia Plaza
Quinquina
Paul Perri
Major Bobby Chavez
Hector Mercado
Miguel
Mark Margolis
General Olmedo
Mateo Gomez
Ernesto Flores
Ruth de Sosa
Rita Chavez
Gerald Castillo
DEA Director
Geof Brewer
Major Anderson
Rick Prieto
Rita's Killer
Sharlene Ross
Michael Heit
Richard Warlock
DEA Agents in Van
Chris Castillejo
Alex
Dave Brodett
Mercenary Captain
Rina Reyes
Olmedo's Mistress
Subas Herrero
President Alcazar

Ronnie Lazaro
Quinquina's Husband
Miguel Faustmann
Host at Rio Ball
Kevin Kleppe
Wrong Ramon
Mimi
Sananes Wilheim
Dancing Apple Girl
Jef Hammett
Attorney
Kelly Wicker
Judge
Trevor Kunz
Steward
Ruel Vernal
Roland Dantes
Rolando Aquino
Kris Aguilar
Reynaldo Guiao Jnr
Alberto Dominguez
Ramon's Bodyguards
Craig Judd
Michael Welborn
Skinheads
Luis del Castillo III
Other Mercenary
Eric Hahn
Jaime Miguel
Curtis Carter
DEA Agents
Pita Liboro
Vietnamese Woman
Augusto Victa
Vietnamese Man
Greg Hackbarth
Coastguard Crewman
Jerry Lapuz
Jefe
Carlos Terry
Olmedo's Servant
Alan Vafides
C-130 Pilot
Mike Warbis
C-130 Co-pilot
Colin Massey
Pilot
Steve Brown
Co-pilot
Nils Cruz
Olmedo's Sergeant
Dan Furnad
Delta Radioman
Peter Lindsay
Delta Gunner
André del Amo
Michael Myracle
Reporters
Bill Campbell
Joe Collins
Thomas Davidson
Jim Dixon
Ever Etafo
Ramin Houmayoun
Ned Hourani
Peter Ladd
Tom Leith
Hakan Losnitz
Jon Mosher
Peter Norlin
Andrew Siegenthaler
Mike Silva
Berto Spoor
Don Wilson
Delta Soldiers

9,959 feet
111 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Aaron Norris

An attempt by American drug enforcement agents, led by John Page, to apprehend drug baron Ramon Cota in the midst of a masquerade ball in Rio de Janeiro ends in the death of three of the Americans. Page enlists the help of General Taylor, who introduces him to Colonel Scott McCoy and Major Bobby Chavez of the Delta Force – an elite, covert commando squad – who then capture Cota in an audacious mid-air arrest. Released on bail, Cota murders Chavez's wife and brother, and escapes to his native San Carlos. Chavez follows, but he and three more drug agents, including Page, are captured by Cota's men. Chavez is gassed and Cota sends a videotape of the execution to General Taylor; outraged, the President approves a secret Delta Force mission to San Carlos to rescue the remaining prisoners and to destroy Cota's coca fields.

Sent in ahead of the force, McCoy finds his way to Cota's estate with the help of Quinquina, a village girl whose husband and baby Cota murdered. Climbing a sheer cliff, the only unguarded approach to Cota's fortress, McCoy disables the radar and a couple of Cota's bodyguards, frees the prisoners, but is then captured in his turn. Tied up in the gas chamber, McCoy is only saved when the glass wall is weakened by missiles from the attacking Delta Force helicopter. Cota is knocked unconscious, and McCoy and Page carry him off in his limousine, pursued by Cota's men.

They reach Quinquina's village, where Cota escapes in the confusion of battle. Quinquina catches up with him, but he kills her before McCoy arrives. The American gets the upper hand, and the two of them are harnessed to General Taylor's helicopter. Before they can be winched up to safety, the helicopter comes under attack and they are dragged through the jungle just a few feet off the ground. As the helicopter rises, Cota ridicules McCoy, promising revenge once he is freed on bail again. McCoy is tempted to cut Cota's cable, but before he can do so it snaps of its own accord, and the drug baron plummets to his death.

Having pre-empted US strategy in the Middle East in Menahem Golan's 1986 original *Delta Force*, Chuck Norris now turns his attention to the drug barons of the South. The film gives him an entrance straight out of *Dirty Harry*: dining with a friend in an Oriental restaurant, Scott McCoy has to sort out three drunken punks who are molesting the owner, and then resumes his

meal with the quip: "I didn't fight – I gave a motivational seminar". But this no-frills action film doesn't have the star power of the first instalment (which included Lee Marvin and Hanna Schygulla, as well as the disaster-prone Shelley Winters, George Kennedy and Martin Balsam), though Larry Cohen's star John P. Ryan gives a certifiably gung-ho performance as General Taylor. Norris is his usual impassive self, and his brother Aaron wisely keeps his dialogue to a minimum, leaving other characters to interpret his emotional state ("You've got that look in your eye..." Chavez claims, improbably, twice). In fact, if he did not perform most of his own stunts, Chuck Norris would hardly appear in the film.

What is of interest, however, is a certain congruence with American foreign policy, and not only in relation to South America. McCoy espouses rigid adherence to the law, but selectively, so that he goes to great lengths to bring Cota to justice in the courts, while thinking nothing of despatching his men with a casual twist of the neck. Similarly, finding that the administration in San Carlos is either corrupt or impotent, General Taylor gets presidential approval to mount a terrorist raid of his own; the honest villagers who welcome and assist McCoy as a liberator ("God be with you") are soon forgotten, their homes razed to the ground. Surprisingly, *Delta Force 2* does allow one articulate speech from the San Carlos perspective. Harried by reporters, its president counters, "If America accuses us of being a nation of drug pushers, then we accuse America of being a nation of drug addicts". Unfortunately, motivational seminars are not the order of the day.

Tom Charity

Certificate
15
Distributor
Virgin
Production Company
Recorded Picture Company
Executive Producers
Terry Glinwood
Linda Yellen
Producer
Jeremy Thomas
Co-producer
Ezra Swerdlow
Production Office
Co-ordinator
Ingrid Johanson
Production Managers
Mike Haley
Robert Girolami
Location Manager
Richard Baratta
Location
Co-ordinators
Shaw Burney
Pamela Thur
Post-production Supervisor
Michael Saxton
Casting
Ellen Chenoweth
Local:
Action Casting
Martha Spainhour
Libby Featherston
Additional:
Action Casting of the South East (North Carolina)
Todd M. Thaler (NY)
Captain's Walk
Casting (Connecticut)
Assistant Directors
Bob Girolami
Jane Paul
Timothy M. Bourne
Nathalie Vadim
Screenplay
Arthur Miller
Director of Photography
Ian Baker
Colour
DuArt; prints by Technicolor
Steadicam Operator
Rick Raphael
Editor
John Bloom
Production Designer
Peter Larkin
Art Director
Charley Beal
Art Department Co-ordinator
Andy Hammerstein
Set Decorator
Hilton Rosemarin
Set Dressers
Sam Kome
Dwain Wilson
Polar Bear Shaw
Sculptures
Andrew Benepé
Music
Additional:
Leon Redbone
Music Extracts
"One Fine Day" from *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini, performed by Veronika Kincses, The Hungarian State Opera Orchestra and Chamber Chorus
Music Director/Arrangements
John Altman



No fixed identity – Debra Winger

Music Supervisor
Ray Williams
Songs
"Seduced", "Polly Wolly Doodle", "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" performed by Leon Redbone; "Sympathy and Acknowledgement" by and performed by Mark Isham; "Hymn" by and performed by Paul Williams
Costume Design
Ann Roth
Wardrobe Supervisors
Donna Maloney
Jeanne Mascia
Make-up Artists
Debra Winger:
Leonard Engleman
Nick Nolte:
Ed Henriquez
Title Design
Feref Associates
Titles/Opticals
GSE
Supervising Sound Editor
Don Sharpe
Foley Editor
Rocky Phelan
Sound Recordist
Ivan Sharrock
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Bill Rowe
Ray Merrin
John Falcini
Technical Advisers
Lou Solsbury
Carl Datino
Bob Benson
Key Production Assistant
Anthony D'Esposito
Production Assistants
Richard Allison
Tammy Batts
Mary Bridges
Ken Hudson
Jennifer Gruskoff
Hannah Green
John Kerr
Frank McKenna
Shannon Rayle
Jed Waldo
Stunt Co-ordinator
David Ellis
Stunts
Tim Davison
Don Pulford
Richard Allison

Cast
Debra Winger
Angela Crispini
Nick Nolte
Tom O'Toole
Will Patton
Jerry
Judith Ivey
Connie
Jack Warden
Judge Murdoch
Kathleen Wilhoite
Amy
Frank Converse
Charlie Haggerty
Frank Military
Felix Daniels
Steven Skybell
Father Mancini
Mary Louise Wilson
Jean
Mert Hatfield
Ballanca
Peter Appel
Sonny
Sean Weil
Montana
Timothy D. Wright
Defense Attorney
Elizabeth Ann Klein
Judge
James Parisi
Reporter
R.M. Haley
Driver
T.M. Nelson George
2nd Judge

8,720 feet
97 minutes

United Kingdom 1990

Director: Karel Reisz

● In the small New England town of Highbury, private investigator Tom O'Toole is called out by Angela Crispini, who insists that in a miscarriage of justice a young man, Felix Daniels, has been wrongly imprisoned for the brutal murder of his uncle, the influential Dr Victor Daniels. Although wary of Angela's high-strung manner, Tom goes with her to visit Felix, and after the motion for a mistrial is dismissed, decides to take the case (the prosecuting attorney is his old adversary, Charlie Haggerty).

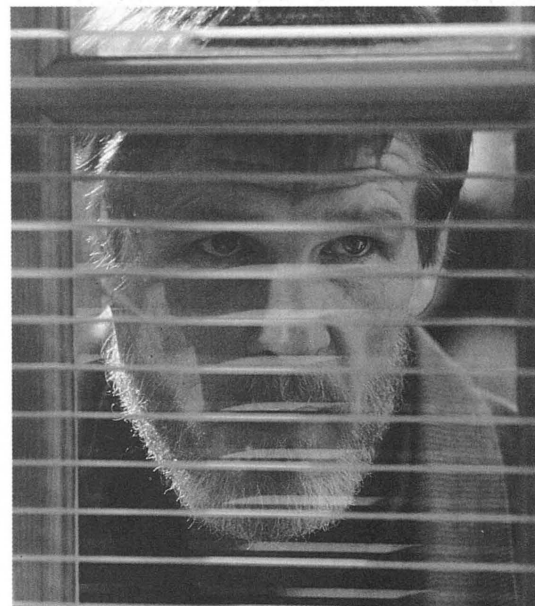
Just prior to seducing him, Angela tells Tom that she knows who the murderer is – Jerry, leader of a local bike gang-cum-religious cult, who tried to turn himself in to the police but was sent away. Tom's sister, Connie, a schoolteacher, with whom he has lived since his wife's death, warns him about Angela's obvious instability and untrustworthiness. But he is intrigued enough to approach Jerry at his disused mill-hangout, where he is building a shrine to Civil War major Seth McCall. Angela's behaviour, meanwhile, becomes increasingly erratic – she appears at the mill, ridicules Tom, and warns him off the case – but his fascination with her increases. He finds her one night on the streets, apparently prostituting herself, and she subsequently tells him that she has been involved as well with Haggerty, and had smuggled drugs for him and Dr Daniels from the Bahamas. Daniels, she claims, was the town's main supplier and Jerry his go-between; if the police had arrested Jerry for Daniels' murder, the scandal would have blown wide open.

Excited by the prospect of a major crusading triumph, Tom persuades Jerry (who killed Daniels because he

refused him money for his shrine) to tell his whole story. Jerry, however, finds absolution in another way – suicide. Tom contacts Judge Murdoch, who is outraged, agrees to reopen the case, and takes Angela into his personal custody. Felix is duly released, but when Tom next approaches Murdoch he is told that the case will go no further, that the repercussions would be too great. Angela, now comfortably installed in the judge's quarters, tells Tom that this way "everybody wins", and the bemused detective leaves a gathering garden party for the town's dignitaries.

● *Everybody Wins*, Arthur Miller's first screenplay since *The Misfits*, emphatically takes us back those thirty years, as both a theatrical and moral experience. Characters are elaborately described – or self-described – through dialogue that is often like parallel monologues. At the same time, they are firmly set in a landscape, both symbolic and physical (here small-town Connecticut, pictured in crystalline detail), in which their tiny failures of communication and understanding, their failure to penetrate that landscape, pose familiar Miller problems of how to apprehend and deal with reality. It might be said that the author has mellowed, to the extent that this small-town world is the one he has himself occupied for those thirty years, and its thoroughgoing civic corruption just can't excite the same ire or despair as the betrayed myths of the West.

There's a cheery relativism in the way corruption is exposed here – becoming a sarcastic celebration in the closing party, orchestrated to "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight". Both Miller's theatrical language and Karel Reisz's crisp pictures assert a sort of indifference, a hard-edged ►



Everybody's looking – Nick Nolte

◀ physical resistance, to what the film seems to be telling us about a decaying moral fabric. In fact, the film's peculiar tone, its shiftiness, may have to do with the way the landmarks, the touchstones of Miller's dramatic universe, are dutifully trotted out (many and varied religious icons, for instance), while the film itself seems to be looking past them, trying to rationalise the world it sees in a less absolute fashion. To a certain extent, of course, this 'parallax' view goes with the territory: *Everybody Wins* is a private-eye film in which fields of vision (Tom O'Toole's hobby is bird-watching) will always be partial and limited. But this is also Old Testament Miller half-converted – perhaps to a view of crime and corruption, and how much headway the individual can be expected to make against it, like that of his thoroughly urbanised co-religionist Sidney Lumet. The latter filmed *A View from the Bridge*, and is often still inclined to Miller's theatrical language and the themes – the Fall & After, guilt and redemption – that go with it.

Everybody Wins itself has moved towards Lumet's naturalistic crime films, with a plot which takes its compromised hero to the point where he believes he may be on to a winning crusade, only to have the big issue dissolve into a lot of (unresolvable) little issues. What *Everybody Wins* doesn't go in for is Lumet's cross-sectioning realism, the fascinating sense of infinite moral distinctions springing from infinite social, ethnic, individual differences. Characters here are picked out distinctly from their background, fully equipped for symbolic drama. From the major (Will Patton's biker-doper) to the minor (the local priest), they behave as if the light of God still suffused them, or had just deserted them.

What Reisz brings to this might be called toning down, the kind of visual precision which has so often looked like prissiness – putting a series of receding frames round his subjects – but here lends an objective reality to the symbolic drama. In Debra Winger's heroine of no fixed identity, he even finds a more suitable case for study, for the truth-or-fiction games that link up with Miller's slipperiness-of-reality theme, than he did with the eponymous mystery woman of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. What neither author is really able to evoke and draw on – though the film often suggests that they're trying – is the tradition of the *femme fatale*, the private eye and *film noir*. In their different ways, both men insist on shining only the brightest light on these murky areas.

Richard Combs

Hamlet



Pragmatically corrupted: Glenn Close, Alan Bates

Certificate

U

Distributor

Guild

Production Company

Carolco

Executive Producer

Bruce Davey

Producer

Dyson Lovell

Production

Supervisor

David Barron

Production

Controller

Paul Tucker

Production

Co-ordinator

Clare St. John

Location Manager

Nicholas Daubeny

Casting

Joyce Nettles

Assistant Directors

Michael Murray

Gerry Toomey

Kevin Westley

Cliff Lanning

Screenplay

Christophe De Vore

Franco Zeffirelli

Based on the play by

William Shakespeare

Director of

Photography

David Watkin

Camera Operator

Derek Browne

Editor

Richard Marden

Production Designer

Dante Ferretti

Art Directors

Michael Lamont

(Supervisor)

James Morahan

Franco Ceraolo

Antonio Tarolla

Alan Tomkins

Set Decorator

Francesca Lo Schiavo

Draughtsmen

Andrew Ackland-Snow

Simon Lamont

Scenic Artist

Brian Bishop

Sculptures

Allan Moss

Roy Rodgers

Music/Music

Director

Ennio Morricone

Music Performed by

Unione Musicisti Di

Roma Mediaeval:

The Dufay Collective

Orchestrations

Ennio Morricone

Music Co-ordinator

Enrico De Melis

Music Editor

Robin Clarke

Costume Design

Maurizio Millenotti

Ann Brault

Enrico Serafini

Wardrobe Supervisor

Richard Pointing

Make-up Artists

Supervisor:

Franco Corridoni

Mel Gibson:

Lois Burwell

Glenn Close:

Jean-Luc Russier

Title Design

Maurice Binder

Titles/Opticals

General Screen

Enterprises

Sound Editors

Nicholas Stevenson

Dialogue:

Archie Ludski

Foley Editor

Tony Message

Sound Recordists

David Stephenson

Music:

Sergio Marcotulli

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Gerry Humphreys

Dean Humphreys

Production Assistant

Alison Odell

Stunt Doubles

Graham Crowther

Paul Jennings

Tina Maskell

Duel Arranger

William Hobbs

Horse Master

Roy Street

Cast

Mel Gibson

Hamlet

Glenn Close

Queen Gertrude

Alan Bates

Claudius

Paul Scofield

Ghost

Ian Holm

Polonius

Helena

Bonham-Carter

Ophelia

Stephen Dillane

Horatio

Nathaniel Parker

Laertes

Sean Murray

Guildenstern

Michael Maloney

Rosencrantz

Trevor Peacock

Gravedigger

John McEnery

Osric

Richard Warwick

Bernardo

Christien Anhalt

Marcellus

Dave Duffy

Francisco

Vernon Dobtcheff

Reynaldo

Pete Postlethwaite

Player King

Christopher Fairbank

Player Queen

Sarah Phillips

Ned Mendez

Roy York

Marjorie Bell

Justin Case

Roger Low

Pamela Sinclair

Baby Simon Sinclair

Roy Evans

The Players

12,082 feet
134 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Franco Zeffirelli

● In the mediaeval Danish court of Elsinore, Queen Gertrude has married Claudius, brother to her recently deceased husband. Now king, Claudius bids the late king's son, Hamlet, not to mourn excessively, but Hamlet cannot contain his disgust at his mother's marriage. Before leaving for France, the young courtier Laertes warns his sister Ophelia against Hamlet's declarations of love.

Hamlet confronts his father's ghost, who accuses Claudius of his murder and urges Hamlet to avenge him. Ophelia's father Polonius tells the king and queen that Hamlet is mad for love of his daughter, and then confronts the prince who, feigning madness, mocks him. Hamlet meets Ophelia and treats her just as brusquely. When a troupe of travelling players arrives, Hamlet has them perform a play designed to reveal Claudius' guilt by enacting a version of his own crime. Hamlet hesitates to kill a guilt-stricken Claudius at prayer but, while confronting his mother in her chamber, stabs Polonius, who is spying from behind an arras.

Claudius despatches Hamlet to England, accompanied by his old fellow students Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who carry warrants for the prince's execution. But exchanging the letters, Hamlet has them killed in his place. Laertes returns to Elsinore to find that Ophelia has now gone mad; soon after, she is reported drowned. Hamlet returns to see Ophelia's funeral; Claudius arranges for Hamlet and Laertes to fight a duel in which Hamlet is to be killed with a poisoned sword. During the duel, Claudius gives Hamlet a poisoned cup to drink from, but Gertrude takes it instead and dies. Hamlet and Laertes are both mortally wounded, but Hamlet manages first to kill Claudius.

● Surmounting what would seem to be the primary problem of this *Hamlet* – how will Mel Gibson and Glenn Close deal with their parts, and how can their familiar screen personae avoid getting in the way – both leads stand up honourably, with some solid, unshowy acting, to a cluster of high-calibre British Shakespeareans. But that then becomes the problem: a touch of Hollywood excess would have been welcome in this excessively sober *Hamlet*. By casting such a quintessentially virile actor as Gibson (whose dourest moods suggest a rugged Celtic broodiness, à la Sean Connery), Zeffirelli dispels the stereotype of the prince as stand-offish aesthete, in the Gielgud line.

But he also erases some of the more complex angst associated with the part from the 60s onwards, in stage performances by David Warner, Jonathan Pryce and, most recently and spectacularly, Daniel Day Lewis. This Hamlet is unequivocally a man of action, particularly when battling Laertes with clanking broadswords – in the one scene Gibson attacks with alloyed gusto. It is a casting touch which makes this, if not an overtly reactionary *Hamlet*, at least an implicitly anti-intellectual one. For the most part, Gibson's performance is excessively august, as if he were trying above all to live down the flightier connotations of his usual image.

Decorum similarly prevails too much among the rest of the cast. The film's naturalistic tone means that any eccentricity in the playing risks appearing incongruously staid (hence also the drastic reduction of comic content, such as the gravedigger scene and the badinage with Osric). Thus, Ian Holm's Polonius is a stolid, blustering burgher, and Close's Gertrude a discreetly amorous matron, whose only particular suitability for the part, given this literal context, seems to be that she looks plausibly Danish.

The only lead to carry real interpretative weight is Helena Bonham Carter's Ophelia, no wilting innocent but a young woman whose obstreperous pique is more than a

match for the humours of her father and her lover. One side effect, however, of the generally understated playing is that Alan Bates' Claudius, rather than being an out-and-out villain, comes across as a pragmatic operator, *au fait* with the nastier exigencies of power, but probably no worse than the man he has supplanted. Indeed, the film tilts the scales against Hamlet's father, played by Paul Scofield as an anguished and perhaps even unsavoury ghoul, his worn features testifying to the "foul crimes" that have sent him to hell.

But such interpretative touches seem almost incidental in a very literal reading of the play. The castle designed by Dante Ferretti (in fact, a composite of Shepperton sets with

three British ruins) is singularly lacking in atmosphere, despite the painstaking attention to detail. The locale is established in the opening shots, lit in the drab blue-grey haze that is one keynote of the film's visual style (the other is the golden glow one associates with Zeffirelli). Elsinore scarcely seems a real place, much less a symbolic one, and comes across as a standard-issue mediaeval castle, as opposed to the infinitely extendable Piranesi labyrinth of Olivier's 1948 version.

The lack of spatial fluidity is underlined by the one scene that does aim at stylisation – when Hamlet, having pursued the ghost to the castle's furthest ramparts, is seen framed against a dimly glimpsed, barren horizon. But this only serves to remind us that there is precious little world outside Elsinore. This, too, bears on the textual cuts made by Zeffirelli and co-writer Christophe De Vore. As well as axeing the initial appearance of the Ghost (thereby establishing *Hamlet* from the start as a much less metaphysical drama than usual), they also excise the sub-plot about Fortinbras' march on Denmark, losing the sense of Elsinore's claustrophobic isolation. This is exacerbated by opening out the play, by having Hamlet meet Rosencrantz and Guildenstern on a windswept beach, and by showing his sea voyage and the execution of his companions.

Most grievously, there is scarcely any room for the theatrical in this *Hamlet*. Zeffirelli, known for the lavish tableaux of *Romeo and Juliet* and his opera films, is here largely inclined against the picturesque, save for the statutory banquet scene. But in opting for downbeat naturalism, he reduces the play's thematics of drama – for instance, the question of Hamlet's 'acting' mad seems to disappear. The film does occasionally benefit from its prosaic bias. Ophelia's garland of herbs is inventively composed of straws, nails and bones; unfortunately, immediately after, her death scene accompanied by Gertrude's voice-over has her gasping a more conventional bouquet of flowers.

Other interpretative touches are more commonplace: the lascivious fervour with which Gertrude kisses Hamlet in the bedchamber scene seems partly a routine acknowledgment of the standard Oedipal reading of the play, partly the film's main justification for casting Close, an actress associated with a slightly excessive, slightly jaded sexuality. Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* does have its insights, but they lack any visual logic that might give them a greater overall significance. All in all, this is set-text cinema Shakespeare at its most inexpressive.

Jonathan Romney



Dourly motivated: Mel Gibson

Certificate
15
Distributor
UIP
Production Companies
Universal
A Badham/Cohen Group - William Sackheim production
Producers
William Sackheim
Rob Cohen
Co-producer
Peter R. McIntosh
Associate Producer
Keith Rubinstein
D. J. Caruso
Production Co-ordinators
Ingrid Johanson
2nd Unit:
Judith
Lynn Brown
Alexis Alexanian
Unit Production Manager
Peter R. McIntosh
2nd Unit:
Eva Fyer
Location
Manager:
Neri Kyle
Tannenbaum
Co-ordinators:
Antoine Douaihy
Jeff Flach
2nd Unit Manager:
Peter Pastorelli
Casting
Bonnie Timmermann
Associate:
Jeff Block
Extras:
Sylvia Fay
ADR Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
David Sosna
Tony Adler
Frank Serrano
2nd Unit:
Nathalie Vadim
Harvey Waldman
Drew Ann Rosenberg
Michael DeCasper
John Gallagher
Cyd Adams
Screenplay
Daniel Pyne
Lem Dobbs
Story
Lem Dobbs
Michael Kozoll
Directors of Photography
Robert Primes
Don McAlpine
Colour
DeLuxe
2nd Unit Photographer
Ron Fortunato
Camera Operators
Bill Steiner
Richard Mingalone
2nd Unit:
Bruce McCallum
Tom Weston
David Greene
Steadicam Operator
Dave Knox
Consulting Cinematographer
Alicia Webber
Video Playback
Joe Trammell
Editors
Frank Morriss
Tony Lombardo
Associate Editors
Jeff Jones
Dallas Puett
Production Designer
Philip Harrison
Art Director
John Kasarda
Set Decorator
Susan Bode
Storyboard Artists
Nikita Knatz
John Davis
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Jeff Jarvis
Special Effects Crew
Gay Bentley
Dan Cangemi



Clashing: James Woods, Michael J. Fox

John Otteson
Edward Drohan IV
Mike Reedy
John McLeod
Andrew Miller
Gary Schaedler
Casey Cavanagh
Jeff Brink
Mike Maggi
Tom Catalano
Ron Otteson
Anthony Maggi
Smoking Gunn
Billboard Sculpture/Structure/Animation/Effects
Showtech, Inc.
Technical Supervisor:
William G. Mensching
Project Manager:
Michael Beetham
Sculpting Supervisor:
Michael Wayne Miles
Scenic Artists:
Richard Prouse
Ernie Foster
Alida Beetham
Paul Dale
Smoke Effects
Richard Huggins
Theater Magic
Music
Arthur B. Rubinstein
Music Performed By
The Badham/Cohen
Big Apple Juicers
Drums: Steve Schaeffer
Percussion:
Mike Fisher
Efrain Toro
Don Williams
Bob Zimmitti
Guitar: Dennis Budemis
Bass: Chuck Domanico
Keyboards: David S. Rubinstein
Arthur B. Rubinstein
John Berkman
Saxophone: Joel C. Peskin
Orchestrations
Mark J. Horder
Music Editor
John Caper Jr
Supervisor:
Doug Lackey

Songs
"Momma Said Knock You Out" by M. Williams, J. T. Smith, performed by LL Cool J; "La Marea (Karneval)" by Tabon Combo, performed by Cuco Valoy; "Theme from The Today Show" by John Williams; "Murdergram (Live at Rapmania)" by M. Williams, J. T. Smith, performed by LL Cool J; "This Neighbourhood" by Simon Stokes, Chris Pinnick, performed by Simon Stokes; "El Milloncito" by Cuco Valoy, José Pena Suazo, performed by Cuco Valoy; "Runaround Sue" by Ernest Maresca, Dion Di Mucci, performed by Dion; "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Bob Gaudio, Bob Crewe, performed by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons; "Fightin' Boogie" by Harry Garfield, performed by Pack and Plow
Costume
Design:
Mary Vogt
Supervisor:
Guy Tanno
Wardrobe
Men's Supervisor:
Robert E. Musco
Women's Supervisor:
Rose Cuervo
Make-up Artists
Bernadette Mazur
Michael J. Fox:
Richard Provenzano
James Woods:
Deborah Lamia-Denaver
2nd Unit:
Joe Cuervo
Titles
R/Greenberg Associates, Inc.
Supervising Sound Editor
William L. Manger
Sound Editors
Neil Burrow
James J. Isaacs
Keith Mouat
John M. Phillips
Solange S. Boisseau
Dialogue:
Richard Oswald
Sound Recordists
James Sabat
Music:
Bruce Botnick
ADR Recordist
Tanya Sharp David
Foley Recordist
James Ashwill
Dolby stereo

Dubbing Recordist
Albert Romero
Sound Re-recordists
Rick Alexander
Jim Bolt
Joel Fein
Foley Artists
Kevin Bartnof Hilda Hodges
Police Adviser
James Wood
Production Assistants
Lois Nalepka
Alexandra "Dusty" Cohen
Mindy Morgenstern
Matthew Weiner
Susan Rossi
Adam Stoner
Paul Bode
Eric Zoback
Carlos Moore
Dan Nalepka
Sean Ferguson
Gardner Baldwin
2nd Unit:
Scott Kordish
Joe Daly
Eddee Kolos
Amy Lauritsen
Roni Wheeler Poole
John Fischer
Stunt Co-ordinator
Conrad E. Palmisano
Stunts
George Aguilar
Bruce Barbour
Paul R. Bucossi
Kerrie Cullen
Nancy Ellen
Frank Ferrara
Dick Hancock
Don Hewitt
Ken Kensei
Conan Lee
Richard Piemonte
Rick Seaman
Danny Aiello III
Dana Bertolotto
Peter Bucossi
Richard L. Douglass
E. J. Evans
Gene Harrison
Jery Hewitt
Barbara Klein
Diane Peterson
Debbie Lynn Ross
Lawrence Tan
Manny Siverio
Harry Wowchuk
Stunt Doubles
Michael J. Fox:
Charlie Groughwell
James Woods:
Steve Lambert
Stand-ins
Michael J. Fox:
Robbie Bryan
James Woods:
Ed Murphy
Stephen Lang:
Brad Hamler
Annabella Sciorra:
Lisa Rielle

Cast
Michael J. Fox
Nick Lang
James Woods
John Moss
Stephen Lang
Party Crasher
Annabella Sciorra
Susan
Delroy Lindo
Captain Brix
Luis Guzman
Pooley
Mary Mara
China
LL Cool J
Billy
John Capodice
Grainy
Christina Ricci
Bonnie
Conrad Roberts
Witherspoon
John Costelloe
Fake Dead Guy/Cop
Bill Cobbs
Raggedy Man
Penny Marshall
Angie
George Cheung
Drugs Dealer
Frank Geraci
Newsman
Sophie Maletsky
Pizza Waitress
Lewis Black
Rand Foerster
Anderson Matthews
Bankers
Kathy Najimy
Lang's Girl Friday
Dante Smith
Dwayne McClary
Sharrieff Pugh
Anthony Thomas
Howard "Stick" Baines
Shawn McLean
Curtis McLaren
Dead Romeos
Keenan Leung
Asian Gang Leader
Reno
Diner Waitress
Jack Gindi
Ticket Taker
Leif Riddell
Head Mugger
John Sanchez
Joseph Tripi
Muggers
Karen Lynn Gorney
Woman in Subway
Janet Sarno
Continental Representative
Jan Speck
TV Reporter
Holly Knespeat
"Smoking Gunn" Girl
John Ring
Homeboy Cop
Michael Jeffery Words
Cop
William Truesdale
Witherspoon's Bodyguard
Mark Woodcock
Clothing Salesman
Ed Setrakian
Chief Villain
David O. Sosna
Frog Dog Vendor
Adore O'Hara
Dead Entertainer
Michael Badalucco
Pizza Man
Jordanna Freedman
Moviegoer
Merrill Witten
Scared Subway Woman
Fracaswell Hyman
Wino
Mario Bosco
Boy in Theatre
Bryant Gumbel
Himself

9,994 feet
111 minutes

USA 1991

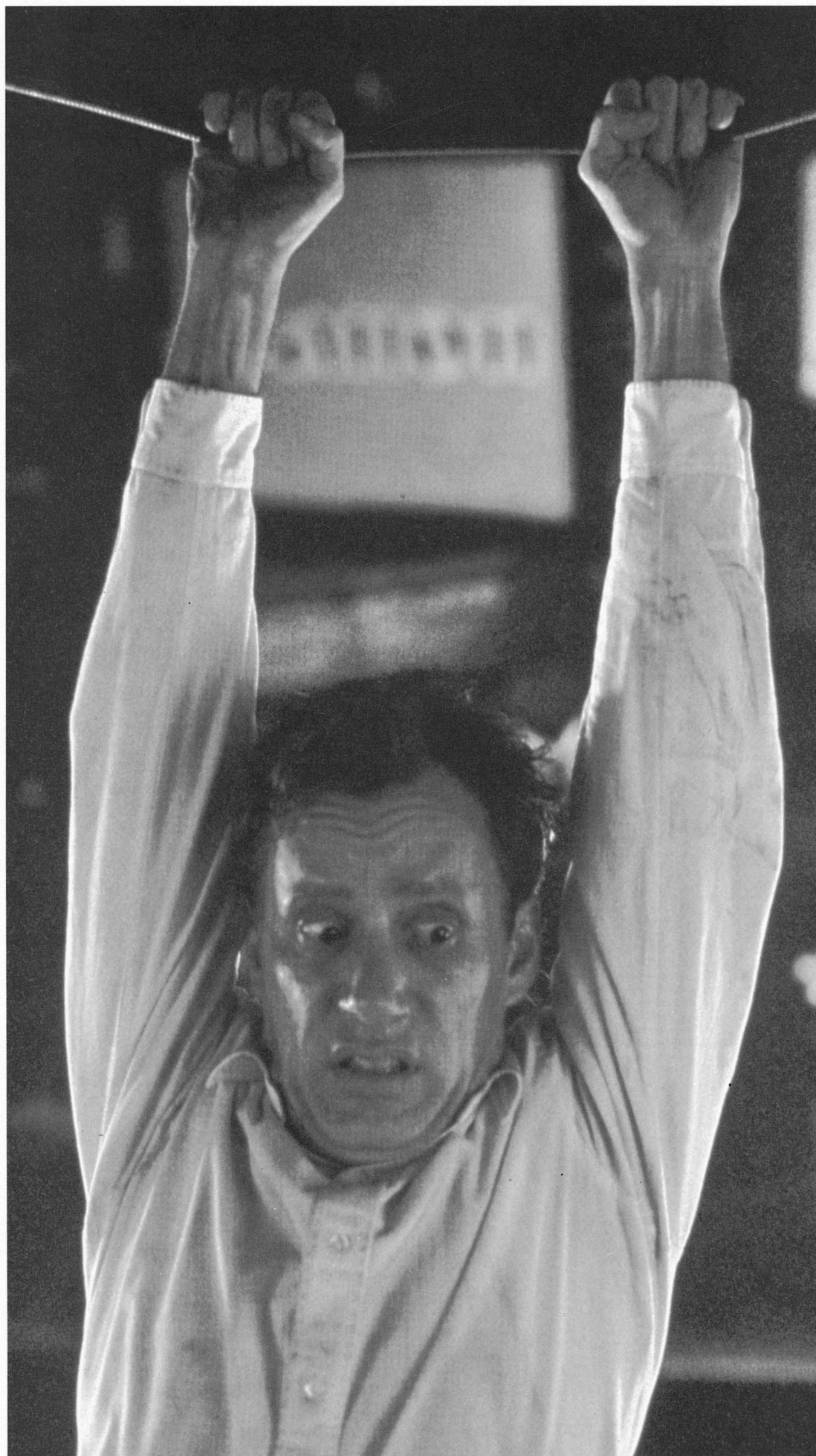
Director: John Badham

● New York: A serial killer who calls himself the Party Crasher has been killing selected low-lives after informing the police of his intention. Tough cop John Moss arrives at a club after the latest tip-off, just in time to see the Crasher shoot dead a drug dealer. A high-speed car chase ends with the killer escaping and Moss receiving a reprimand and orders to let someone else take over the case.

Hollywood: Lightweight actor Nick Lang, star of *Smoking Gunn II*, wants to move out of special-effects fantasies and appear in a realistic police movie, going so far as to arrange to go on the beat for a week to research the part. Moss' captain assigns the undercover star to him, and orders him to keep Nick out of trouble. Antagonistic to his 'partner' and still pursuing the Crasher case on his own time, Moss is also having problems with his girlfriend Susan, whose young daughter dislikes him. Taking tips from Nick on how to woo the girl, Moss still has to get the star out of various scrapes as they track down the arms dealer believed to have sold custom weapons to the Crasher.

Finally, Moss sets Nick up to believe that he has shot a man dead and packs him off to the airport, vowing to cover up the incident. But Nick returns and finds the dead man alive, whereupon he intervenes again in Nick's life. The Crasher abducts Susan and hides out on top of a huge hoarding display for *Smoking Gunn II*, summoning Moss and Nick for a confrontation. In the ensuing fight, the Crasher is killed, Nick is wounded and Moss saves Susan. Later, at the premiere of Nick's movie, Moss discovers that Nick has used him as the model for his own performance.

● Following his loose trilogy of 'hardware' movies (*Blue Thunder*, *WarGames*, *Short Circuit*), John Badham has now made three star-duo comedy-thrillers. The earlier group of films suggested a cluster of darts not quite hitting the bullseye (*WarGames* came closest), but the progression from *Stakeout* and *Bird on a Wire* to *The Hard Way* suggests a learning curve whereby Badham has finally, with this movie, pulled off the trick. The previous films were hamstrung because their mismatched pairs (Richard Dreyfuss/Emilio Estevez; Mel Gibson/Goldie Hawn) never really seemed to be in the same film together, and Badham was almost embarrassed by the thinness of the plots surrounding them. But *The Hard Way* takes advantage of, and indeed plays amusing games with, the clashing connotations of its stars,



Getting on with a tough job – James Woods

the intense and committed heavyweight loser James Woods and the disarmingly light and bumbling winner Michael J. Fox. Furthermore, its thin and ridiculous storyline is actually to its advantage, as if the realistic John Moss had stumbled into a situation from a Nick Lang movie, which is literally the trigger of the wild finale.

As John Moss gets on with his tough job, fighting against circumstances and refusing to be a stereotyped movie character (taking Nick to his apartment, which is spacious and well-kept with tasteful pictures, Moss snaps, "You expect it to be a tip because that's the way it is in the movies"), it is impossible not to think of James Woods the actor. The latter has consistently taken challenging and demanding roles and given intense, critically acclaimed performances that have not resulted in significant box-office success or even the peer-group acknowledgment of major acting awards. Similarly, Michael J. Fox's Nick Lang is introduced in a superbly bitchy pastel-hued sequence set in his Hollywood mansion, where Penny Marshall is on hand as his agent and in-jokes poke fun at Steven Spielberg and Mel Gibson.

The two men grate on each other far more effectively than Badham's earlier pairs, with Fox, as in *Back to the Future Part III*, ceding the romantic side of the picture to an older, craggier star while he gets on with his adolescent high-jinks. Put together like the kind of film Woods refers to as "Hollywood horse-shit" – with every scene calculated by demographics to contribute to an overall entertainment package of thrills, laughs, pathos, romance, music and salaciousness – *The Hard Way* also proves that sometimes the system, fuelled here by self-mocking jibes, can turn out films appreciable and enjoyable as product without adding anything to the cinema.

Badham, whose skills at action have been somewhat muted of late, relishes the chance to stage some high-speed car chases and violent encounters with Stephen Lang's cartoonish monster. The plot advances in contrived lurches – something Nick justifies by actually predicting what the killer will do next, because "in Act Three" the madman always kidnaps the hero's girl. But *The Hard Way* also has a genuinely powerful forward motion, fuelled by some effective use of a variety of music cues, a smattering of easy laughs at the expense of cellphones, hot dogs, cappuccino and other exemplars of cop/movie-star life styles, and a rich look that contrasts strikingly with the blandness of *Stakeout* and *Bird on a Wire*.

Kim Newman

King Ralph

Certificate
PG
Distributor
UIP
Production Companies
Universal.
A Mirage/Ibro production
Executive Producers
Sydney Pollack
Mark Rosenberg
Producer
Jack Brodsky
Co-producers
Julie Bergman
John Comfort
Production Co-ordinator
Janine Lodge
Unit Production Manager
John Comfort
Location Managers
William Lang
Peter Elford
Post-production Supervisor
Carol Dantuono
Casting
Mary Selway
Assistant Directors
Derek Cracknell
Melvin Lind
Julian Wall
Screenplay
David S. Ward
Based on the novel
Headlong by Emyln Williams
Director of Photography
Kenneth MacMillan
Colour
Eastman Colour
Camera Operator
Mike Proudfoot
Editor
John Jympson
Associate Editor
William Webb
Production Designer
Simon Holland
Art Director
Clinton Cavers
Set Decorator
Peter Walpole
Draughtspeople
Peter Russell
Suzanna Smith
Lucy Richardson
Sculptures
Peter Voysey
Janet Stevens
Master:
Fred Evans
Special Effects Supervisor
John Morris
Music
James Newton
Howard

Music Director
Marty Paich
Orchestrations
Brad Dechter
Chris Boardman
Supervising Music Co-ordinator
Michael Mason
Music Editors
James L. Weidman
Dina Eaton
Songs
"Good Golly Miss Molly" by Robert Blackwell, John Marascalco, performed by Little Richard; "Tiny Bubbles" by Leon Pober, performed by John Goodman; "Be-Bop A-Lula" by Gene Vincent, Sheriff Tex Davis; Song from *Moulin Rouge* "Where Is Your Heart" by George Auric, William Engvik; "I'm in the Mood for Love" by Dorothy Fields, Jimmy McHugh; "Good Golly Miss Molly" by Robert Blackwell, John Marascalco, performed by John Goodman; "Duke of Earl" by Earl Edwards, Eugene Dixon, Bernice Williams, performed by John Goodman
Choreographer
Pat Garrett
Costume Designer
Catherine Cook
Wardrobe Supervisor
Annie Crawford
Make-up
Jane Royle
Supervisor:
Peter Robb-King
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Sound Design
Ivan Sharrock
Supervising Sound Editor
Scott A. Hecker
Sound Editors
Dialogue:
Bobby Mackston
Matt Sawelson
ADR Editor
Bill Voightlander
Foley Editors
Chris Flick
Dave Arnold
Sound Recordist
Music:
Shawn Murphy
Foley Recordist
Dean Drabin
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Chris Jenkins
Mark Smith
Doug Hemphill
Sound Effects Editor
Joel Valentine
Sound Effects
John Paul Fasal
Sound Effects
Todd-AO/Glen Glenn
Foley Artists
Gary Hecker
Katie Rowe
Stunt Co-ordinator
Greg Powell

Cast
John Goodman
Ralph Jones
Peter O'Toole
Willingham
John Hurt
Lord Graves
Camille Coduri
Miranda
Richard Griffiths
Phipps
Leslie Phillips
Gordon
James Villiers
Hale
Joely Richardson
Princess Anna
Niall O'Brien
McGuire
Julian Glover
King Gustav
Judy Parfitt
Queen Katherine
Ed Stobart
Dysentery
Gedren Heller
Punk Girl
Rudolph Walker
King Mulambon
Michael Johnson
Hamilton
Ann Beach
Miranda's Mother
Jack Smethurst
Miranda's Father
Roger Ashton Griffiths
Royal Photographer
Brian Greene
Ed Mayes
Dallas Adams
MC Strip Club
Adele Lakeland
Fanny Oakley
Josanne Haydon-Pearce
Vanessa Lee Hicks
Jazzi Northover
Charlotte Pycroft
Dawn Spence
Chorus Girls
Guy Fithen
Bouncer
Ian Gelder
Riding Instructor
Cameron Blakely
Graves' Photographer
Caroline Paterson
Counter Girl
Sally Nesbitt
Onlooker
Richard Whitmore
Male Newscaster
Jennie Stoller
Female Newscaster
Kirk St. James
Sax Player
Tim Seely
King of England
Alison McGuire
Queen of England
Gareth Forwood
Duke
Alan McMahon
Assistant Photographer
Richard Bebb
Gamekeeper
David Stoll
Butler
Chantal-Claire Topaze
Hasfal-School
Charlotte Pycroft
"Dukettes" Back-up Singers
Paul Beech
Tailor
Angus MacKay
Assistant Tailor
Jason Richards
Baby Ralph II

8,726 feet
97 minutes

USA 1991

Director: David S. Ward

When the entire English Royal Family is accidentally electrocuted, the most suitable candidate for the succession is Ralph Jones, a down-at-heel Las Vegas piano player, in line to the throne because of an indiscretion committed by the late Duke of Warren. Ralph is persuaded to accept the monarchy, and is groomed in kingship by private secretary Willingham.

When Ralph falls for Miranda, a reluctant stripper, Lord Graves – a member of the house of Stuart, who believes that the throne is rightfully his – initially persuades her to help discredit Ralph. Graves' henchman, the royal butler Gordon, leaks Ralph and Miranda's romance to the press. But Ralph's first public duty, a meeting with the African king of Zambesi, turns out to be an unexpected success.

Ralph is told he must marry Princess Anna of Finland, in order to seal an industry contract between their two nations. Aware of the problems she is causing him, Miranda tells Ralph she can no longer see him; but Graves tricks her into attending the reception for the Finnish delegation, where Anna, outraged at her presence, breaks off the engagement. Ralph visits Miranda at her parents' home, where she confesses to her part in Graves' plot. Ralph discovers that there was another, equally eligible candidate for the throne – Willingham, who turned the post down. Ralph abdicates in Parliament, and denounces Graves, who is arrested for treason. Ralph is knighted by the new king, Willingham, and he and Miranda are married.

Hot on the heels of *Three Men and a Little Lady*, which offered a similarly archaic Hollywood fantasy of England, *King Ralph* presents a succession of witless stereotypes from start to finish. Among the embarrassing characterisations are a flotilla of crusty Brits, a feather-brained (apparently North of England) Cockney-sparrow heroine (Camille Coduri, giving the same wooden ingénue turn as in *Nuns on the Run*), and an African monarch in feathers and furs who matches Ralph's friendly round of darts with an assegai-throwing contest. John Goodman's hero, on the other hand, shorn of the more glaringly anti-social features of the blue-collar slob, is an amiable, no-nonsense kind of guy, a fount of plain wisdom and dignity.

Writer/director David S. Ward (who won an Oscar for his labyrinthine screenplay for *The Sting*, and more recently directed the baseball comedy *Major League*) has

produced a script singularly lacking in narrative complexity. The episodic format allows for the odd successful gag: the royal electrocution announced in the *Sun* headline "Shocker!"; Ralph's attempt to play frisbee with a gaggle of bewildered corgis; and his riposte when reprimanded for using the word "Yo" in a game of Scrabble: "We're using the King's English, right? If I say it, it's a word". But on the whole, the film is a vehicle for some stale jibes at the most hackneyed English eccentricities: it's a typically false note that the supposedly raunchy Ralph should be embarrassed when presented with spotted dick.

The solid British supporting cast plays up gamely against the odds:



Paltry excess: John Goodman

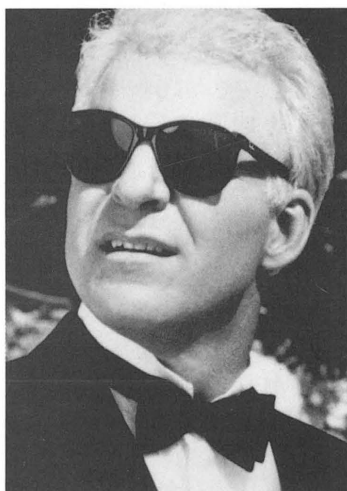
Peter O'Toole and James Villiers casually hit the 'elegant disdain' button, while Richard Griffiths does his patented rotund bumbler act. John Hurt takes on the pencil moustache and caddishness of Leslie Phillips with considerable relish, while Phillips himself is rather muted as his stooge. Best of all is Joely Richardson, shunted on and off too quickly as a glacial but lubricious Finn *fatale*, complete with a startling Garboesque basso profundo. In such company, Goodman's curiously manageable hero treads too carefully: a genuinely slobbish, obstreperous lead like John Candy is clearly called for.

King Ralph's main problem, however, is its inability to be witty about the Royal Family, whose real antics, such as installing a fairground in Buck House, dwarf Ralph's paltry attempts at excess. If Ward had had Ralph suffer standard royal duties like nights out at Stringfellow's, or attending Dire Straits concerts, the film might have been much sharper, and much crueller.

Jonathan Romney



Certificate
15
Distributor
Guild
Production Company
Rastar Productions
Executive Producers
Mario Kassar
Steve Martin
Producers
Daniel Melnick
Michael Rachmil
Production Co-ordinator
Cydney Bernard
Unit Production Manager
Chris Coles
Location Manager
Jerry Ariganello
Post-production Supervisor
Michael R. Sloan
Post-production Co-ordinator
Noori Dehnahi
Casting
Mindy Marin
Assistant Directors
Albert Shapiro
Albert Cho
Screenplay
Steve Martin
Director of Photography
Andrew Dunn
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Ed Gold
Optical Effects Co-ordinator
Chuck Comisky
Matte Shots
Illusion Arts
Editor
Richard A. Harris
Production Designer
Lawrence Miller
Art Director
Charles Breen
Set Decorator
Chris Butler
Set Dressers
Douglas Vaughn
On-set:
Michael Kohan
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Alan E. Lorimer
Special Effects
Lambert Powell
Music
Peter Melnick
Orchestrations
Steve Bernstein
Supervising Music Editor
Oscar Castro-Neves
Music Editor
Kathleen Bennet
Songs
"Epona" by and performed by Enya;
"Exile", "On Your Shore" by Enya, Roma Ryan, Nicky Ryan, performed by Enya;
"I've Had My Moments" by Gus Kahn, Walter Donaldson, performed by Stephane Grappelli, Django Reinhardt; "La Mer" by Charles Trenet, performed by (1) Django Reinhardt and the Quintette of the Hot Club of France with Stephane Grappelli, (2) Charles Trenet; "Do Wah Diddy, Diddy" by Jeff Barry, Ellie Greenwich, performed by Manfred Mann; "You Drive Me to Distraction" by Chas Sanford, Charles Judge, performed by Big World; "Wild Thing" by Chip Taylor, performed by Seeds of Love featuring Jimmie Wood



Welcome to... Steve Martin

Costume Design
Rudy Dillon
Costumers
Liza Stewart
Men: Nick Scarano
Women:
Rosemarie Fall
Steve Martin: Dennis Schoonderwoerd
Make-up Artists
Robert Osterman
Steve Martin: Frank Griffin
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors
Mark Stoecinger
Lon Bender
Sound Editors
Steve Mann
Glenn T. Morgan
Richard King
Lou Kleinman
Neal Berger
Stuart Copley
Raoul
Asher Yates
Supervising ADR Editor
Larry Kemp
ADR Editor
Mary Andrews
Sound Recordists
Jim Webb
Jim Nelson
Music: Michael Stone
Dolby stereo;
(Consultant) Steve F.B. Smith
Sound Re-recordists
Richard Portman
Andy Napell
Production Assistants
Christina Fong
Steve Cowie
Diana Lui
Chris Farley
Jonathan Gordon
Keith Friedman
Steve Buhai
Stunt Co-ordinator
Joe Dunne
Animal Trainer
Boone Narr

Cast
Steve Martin
Harris K. Telemacher
Victoria Tennant
Sara McDowell
Richard E. Grant
Roland
Marilu Henner
Trudi
Sarah Jessica Parker
SanDeE
Susan Forristal
Ariel
Kevin Pollak
Frank Swan
Sam McMurray
Morris Frost
Patrick Stewart
Maitre d' at L'Idiot
Andrew Amador
Gail Grate
News Reporters

Eddie DeHarp
Maitre d' at Brunch
M.C. Shan
Rap Waiter at L'Idiot
Frances Fisher
June
Iman
Cynthia
Tommy Hinkley
Ted
Larry Miller
Tom
Anne Crawford
Sharon
Samantha Caulfield
Sheila
Thornton Simmons
Man
Dennis Dragon
Crook
Richard Stahl
Bank Executive
Aaron Lustig
Boring Speaker
Juliana McCarthy
Woman
Time Winters
Floss Waiter at L'Idiot
Pierre Epstein
Chef
Wesley Thompson
Jesse
George Plimpton
Straight Weatherman
David G. Price
Pilot
Wesley Mann
Gas Station Attendant
Mark Steen
Jaime Gomez
Amy Wallace
Tod Pas
Cheryl Baker
Changing-room
Woman
Mary R. Boss
Old Woman
Scott Johnston
Co-pilot
Robert Lind
Chainsaw Juggler
Tony Marsico
Hard Rock Patron
Burt Nackle
Cameraman
Mary Pedersen
Airline Ticket Agent
Matt Stetson
Spokesmodel Teacher

8,517 feet
95 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Mick Jackson

At brunch with his longtime girlfriend Trudi and several acquaintances, wacky TV weather forecaster Harris K. Telemacher is smitten by visiting London *Times* journalist Sara McDowell. On the way home, Harris' car breaks down near a freeway information sign, which speaks to him and flashes up a riddle.

An attempt by Sara to interview Harris about his job quickly turns into a mocking cultural tour of Los Angeles. Having pre-recorded his weather reports for the weekend, Harris goes back to a clothing store where he earlier left a new pair of trousers to be altered. The lively young assistant who served him, by the name of SanDeE, takes his number and later phones to arrange a drink at the Hard Rock Café. Harris learns that she is training to be a spokesmodel, and that her boyfriend - with whom she has an open relationship - is sitting at the bar. Elated by the news that Trudi and his agent, Frank Swan, have been having an affair for three years, Harris drives to the freeway sign, which reads: the weather will change your life, twice. Harris is sacked after his producer's yacht sinks during a storm not predicted by his pre-recorded forecast. After he and SanDeE visit the California Colonic Institute, Harris tries and fails to book a table at an expensive new restaurant, L'Idiot. Sara, meanwhile, agrees to spend a weekend with her ex-husband, Roland, who is seeking a reconciliation. While being videotaped rollerskating around the LA County Museum by his artist friend Ariel, Harris bumps into Sara and Roland.

Following a dinner at L'Idiot, Harris gets a lift home with Sara and, told by the freeway sign to kiss her, does so. Sara says she has plans for the weekend, but invites Harris to a formal dinner the following evening. During dinner, Harris feigns illness and lures Sara into the garden, where they make love. Harris tells her he has landed a job as a serious news reporter. Both Sara and Roland, and Harris and SanDeE, check into the same Santa Barbara hotel for the weekend. During a prickly time spent in each other's company, Harris learns that Sara is returning to England and declares his love for her. Sara boards her plane, but a freak storm prevents it from taking off. Sara rushes from the airport and she and Harris are reunited. Together they drive to the freeway sign, where the initial riddle is resolved after a fashion.

A romantic comedy which attempts to do for Los Angeles what Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* did for

New York, this is both an ironic celebration of the city's frenetic superficiality and a soft-hearted attempt to illustrate writer/star Steve Martin's belief that "Romance does exist deep in the heart of L.A.". It is doubly ironic, therefore, that this affectionate portrait of a city with no heart confirms precisely what Allen's film - in its cruel, comparative sideswipes at L.A. - maintains. That whereas in New York people fall in love *because* of the romantic setting, in Los Angeles romance occurs *in spite of* the way the sprawling, soulless city conspires to keep them apart. Harris' reaction to his and Ariel's bumping into Sara and Roland at the museum is one of wild, nostalgic delight that such a thing can still happen. Compared with the spontaneous warmth of this chance encounter, the egotistical preening of the brunch with Trudi's "friends and friends of friends" is the epitome of what Allen sees as the city's emotional shallowness.

As the film's scriptwriter and prime driving force, Martin's strategy is to make a virtue of adversity, gently mocking the modish eccentricities of a culture obsessed with appearances and seduced by passing fads. Despite several changes of outfit and much delay, Trudi is mortified to discover that she and Harris, though fashionably late, are still the first to arrive for their brunch date. The meal concluded, the simple business of ordering coffee becomes a ludicrous social ritual as each guest orders some would-be individual variation - double decaff espresso, and the like. However, like Martin's balletic glide through the County Museum, this freewheeling comic celebration of cultural vapidly merely skates over the surface.

That said, there are several hilarious set-pieces. Victoria Tennant's comparatively restrained eccentricity (complete with daft, Annie Hall-style hats and negligible driving skills) provides a useful foil for Martin's wackiness, and the one-liners come thick and fast. Told by Trudi that she has been having an affair with his agent for three years, Harris replies incredulously, "Since the 80s!" His own predictable romance is less convincing, partly because Martin can never resist the temptation to get syrupy, and partly because the central device of the freeway sign is too contrived merely to be thrown away at the end. After British television work such as *Threads* and *A Very British Coup*, and his American-made feature debut (the dour prison drama *Chattahoochee*), this frenetic comedy suggests that émigré director Mick Jackson might also have been infected by the mood of the city.

Nigel Floyd

Certificate
15
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Orion Pictures
Producers
Lauren Lloyd
Wallis Nicita
Patrick Palmer
Associate Producer
Suzanne Rothbaum
Production Controller
Joe Aguilar
Production Co-ordinator
Ann-Cathrin Schmidt
Unit Production Manager
Christopher Cronyn
Location Managers
Charles Miller
Michael Williams
2nd Unit Director
Patrick Palmer
Casting
Margery Simkin
Location:
Carol Larkin
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
Jim Van Wyck
Princess McLean
Alice Bouvrie
Screenplay
June Roberts
Based on the novel by
Patty Dann
Director of Photography
Howard Atherton
In Colour
2nd Unit Photographer
Peter Norman
Camera Operator
Harald Ortenburger
Video Playback Operator
Roger Raiford
Graphics
Gina Coyle
Editor
Jacqueline Cambas
Associate Editor
Brian L. Chambers
Production Designer
Stuart Wurtzel
Art Directors
Steve Saklad
Evelyn Sakash
Set Designers
Deborah Kanter
Philip Messina
Set Decorator
Hilton Rosemarin
Set Dressers
Victor Zolfo
Nicholas Parker
Chris Welling
Paintings of "Sophia"
John Provenzano
Special Effects
Brian Ricci
Music
Jack Nitzsche
Music Performed by/Musical Arrangements
Bradford Ellis
Music Producer
Michael Hoenig
Music Editor
Richard Whitfield
Songs
"Dominique" by Soeur Sourire, Noel Regney, performed by Soeur Sourire; "Fever" by John Davenport, Eddie Cooley, performed by Peggy Lee; "Blame It on the Bossa Nova" by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, performed by Eydie Gorme; "Baby Workout" by Jackie Wilson, Alanzo Tucker, performed by Jackie Wilson; "Johnny Angel" by Lyn Duddy, Lee Pockriss, performed by Shelley Fabares; "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Bob

Crewe, Bob Gaudio, performed by The Four Seasons; "I've Found a New Baby" by Jack Palmer, Spencer Williams, performed by Django Reinhardt; "The Shoop Shoop Song (It's in His Kiss)" by Rudy Clark, performed by (1) Betty Everett, (2) Cher; "Just One Look" by Gregory Carroll, Doris Troy, performed by Doris Troy; "Sugar Shack" by Keith McCormack, Faye Voss, performed by Jimmy Gilmer & the Fireballs; "You've Really Got a Hold On Me" by William Robinson, performed by The Miracles; "Mambo Italiano" by Bob Merrill, performed by Rosemary Clooney; "It's My Party" by Wally Gold, John Gluck, Herb Weiner, performed by Leslie Gore; "Oklahoma" by Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II; "Stubborn Kind of Fellow" by George Gordy, William Stevenson, Marvin Gaye, performed by Marvin Gaye; "Sleepwalk" by Farina, Farina & Farina, performed by Santo & Johnny; "Love Is Strange" by Sylvia Robinson, Mickey Baker, E. McDaniel, performed by Mickey & Sylvia; "If You Wanna Be Happy" by Frank J. Guida, Carmela Guida, Joseph Royster, performed by Jimmy Soul
Costume Design
Marit Allen
Costumers
Debbie Holbrook
Peggy Stamper
Wardrobe Supervisor
Fred Lloyd
Make-up Artists
Mickey Scott
Cher:
Leonard Engleman
Supervising Sound Editors
Mike Dobie
Jeff Bushelman
Sound Editors
Virginia Cook
McGowan
Bruce Lacey
Colin C. Mouat
Jayme S. Parker
ADR Editor
Mary Andrews
Sound Recordists
Richard Lightstone
Music:
Pamela Neal
Dolby stereo
Supervising Sound Re-recorder
Mark Berger
Sound Effects
E. Larry Oatfield
Foley Artists
Gary "Wrecker" Hecker
Catherine Rowe
Production Assistants
Tom Burke
Hugh Mackay
Michael Fitzpatrick
Pamela Ranger
D.J. Sperry
Jennifer Ingalls
Post-production:
Clif "Chick" Taylor
Office:
Tom Potter

Stunt Co-ordinator
Brian Ricci
Stunts
Linda Arvidson
Elyse Garfinkel
Stand-ins
Cher:
Gina Turcketta
Bob Hoskins:
Sammy Pasha
Winona Ryder/
Christina Ricci:
Jane Bouras
Winona Ryder:
Cam McCormack
Michael Schoeffling:
Randy Nickerson
Cast
Cher
Mrs Flax
Bob Hoskins
Lou Landsky
Winona Ryder
Charlotte Flax
Michael Schoeffling
Joe Peretti
Christina Ricci
Kate Flax
Caroline McWilliams
Carrie
Jan Miner
Mother Superior
Betsey Townsend
Mary O'Brien
Richard McElvain
Mr Crain
Paula Plum
Mrs Crain
Dossy Peabody
Coach Parker
William Paul Steele
Boss in Oklahoma
Rex Trailer
Dr Reynolds
Pete Kovner
Perfect Family Father
Patricia Madden
Perfect Family Mother
Justin Marchisio
Perfect Family Boy
Caitlin Marie Bottomley
Perfect Family Girl
Amy Gollnick
Seacia Pavao
Girls in Bathroom
Merle Perkins
Nurse
Baxter Harris
Boss in Massachusetts
Carol Moss
Boss' Fiancée
Denise Cormier
Girl in Shoe Store
Al Hodgkins
Crying Man on Street
Tamasin Scarlet Johnson
Young Nun
Sandra Shipley
Crying Nun
Russell Jones
Swim-meet Judge
Shawna Sullivan
Charlotte age 5
Bob Rogerson
Charlotte's Dad
Tom Kemp
Carrie's Husband
Janice Janes
Bill McCann
Dotty Pagliaro
New Year's Partiers
Arnie Cox
Michelle Faith
Grace Costa
John McGee
Bill McDonald
Harry Cooper
Lynda Robinson
Kennedy Mourners
Jerry Quinn
Policeman

9,913 feet
110 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Richard Benjamin

1963. The Flax family is preparing to move again: the free-spirited, eccentric Mrs Flax has man trouble, while fifteen-year-old Charlotte is obsessed with Catholic martyrs and wants to become a nun, and her younger sister Kate is a born swimmer who spends most of her time in the pool or in the bath.

At their new home in Eastport, Massachusetts, they are greeted by handsome youth Joe Peretti, who works as an odd-job man for their nearest neighbours, an order of nuns. Charlotte is torn between her religious calling and her feelings for Joe (she learns that he has not dated since high school, when he is rumoured to have made a girl pregnant). She plucks up courage and asks him to take her fishing. Meanwhile, Mrs Flax has become involved with a gregarious local storekeeper, Lou Landsky, who also establishes a rapport with the children (especially Kate), and invites them over to stay the night. He paints for a hobby and persuades Mrs Flax to pose as Cleopatra for him.

The news comes that President Kennedy has been shot, and Charlotte's grief for him becomes confused with her feelings for her father, who disappeared the day she was born. She finds Joe weeping in the convent's bell tower; they comfort each other and kiss, but Charlotte panics and runs off. Consumed by guilt, Charlotte fasts in penance, then becomes convinced that she is pregnant by divine retribution and takes off in her mother's car. When it breaks down,

she 'adopts' the nearest family; they alert Mrs Flax and Lou brings her home. A visit to the gynaecologist clarifies the facts of life for her.

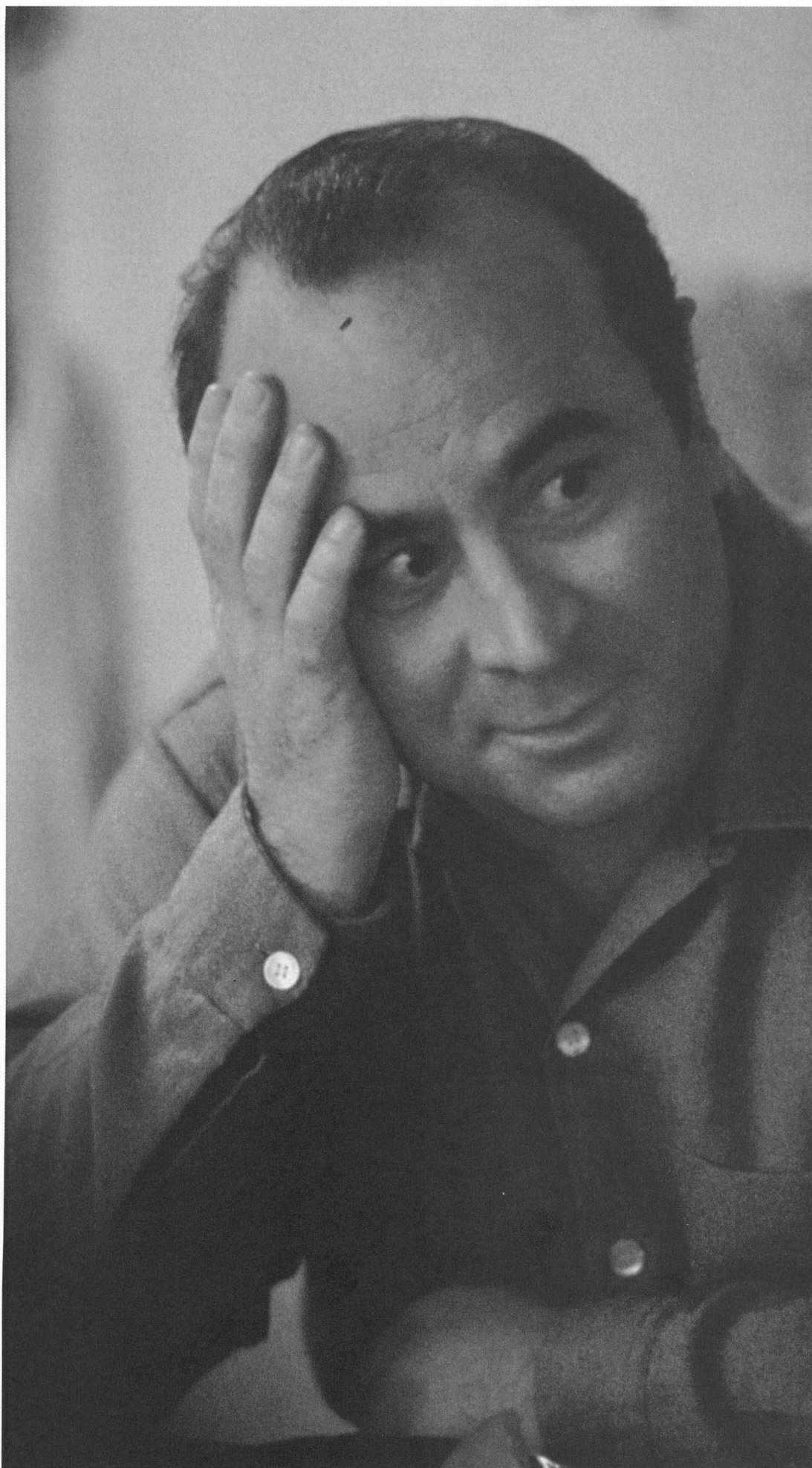
Mrs Flax and Lou attend a New Year fancy dress party (she as a mermaid, he a pirate), but terrified of commitment, she rejects his proposal of marriage. He leaves, and Mrs Flax flirts with Joe Peretti, who gives her a lift home and whom she is on the point of seducing when they are confronted by Charlotte. The next day, Kate watches as Charlotte dons her mother's clothes and make-up, and the two girls swig some alcohol. They walk to the convent, where Kate plays by the pond while Charlotte makes love with Joe in the bell tower. They are disturbed by Kate's cries: drowning in the pond, she is rescued by nuns and rushed to hospital where her life hangs in the balance. She survives but Mrs Flax and Charlotte have a furious showdown. Their differences out in the open, they reach an understanding, and both resolve to face up to their responsibilities. Charlotte begins to experiment with boys; Mrs Flax patches things up with Lou, and the family decide to stay in Eastport.

According to Patty Dann, who wrote the original novel, the title *Mermaids* refers to the "dual child/woman natures of Mrs Flax and Charlotte... Mrs Flax feels unsafe falling in love with the men she dates, preferring to skim the surface of life. To risk total immersion could mean losing her identity and freedom and inviting heartache". The Flax are in flux. But if these characters are, metaphorically, neither fish nor flesh, the same might be said of the film itself, as it wavers between arch comedy and hollow melodrama, each desperately over-pitched.

Narrated in voice-over by Charlotte, the film is nevertheless split between her perceptions and sequences beyond her ken, devoted purely to Mrs Flax (an Oscar-winning star's privilege perhaps). Such a dichotomy need not have been to the film's disadvantage, but the initially droll voice-over rapidly overturns the balance of individual scenes and the film as a whole. As an attempt at adolescent *faux-naïf* (with Winona Ryder wide-eyed and swooning), it is altogether too knowing ("Whoever heard the word of God going ninety miles an hour down the interstate?" she wonders). But more importantly, the frequency of Charlotte's interjections, their forced wry tone, their very irrelevancy, suggests a panic measure extended indiscriminately in post-production. In crucial sequences where mother and daughter fail to communicate, we can't hear Charlotte's frustrated silence because of her insistent



... nor flesh: Bob Hoskins, Cher



Missing the father: Bob Hoskins

voice-over explaining how frustrated she is.

But if the voice-over implicitly disavows the drama, that does not mitigate the inconsistencies therein. The problem here is that while the film (*Cher?*) is in love with the liberated kook Mrs Flax, with her marshmallow kebabs, her polka-dot dresses, and her peppery way with men, religion and social mores, the trajectory of the drama only exposes her shortcomings as a mother and a lover. If she takes what she wants from men, this is ultimately a weakness, an insecurity to be addressed and overcome. If she is a progressive thinker, it is only because she is afraid of looking back. The liveliest moments belong to Mrs Flax (asked what men care about, she tells it like it is: "Astroturf!"). But it is when Charlotte is made over as her mother – in dress, style and attitude (making love in the convent's bell tower, no less) – that younger daughter Kate nearly dies.

For all that Charlotte's old-time religion is the butt of many jokes, her fears of divine retribution are apparently validated; and it is the nuns who rescue Kate. An enormous sentimental attachment to the Family, specifically the Father, is evident throughout. Charlotte yearns for her natural father, but any father will do. Afraid that she is pregnant, she runs away from home straight into the arms of the nearest nuclear family: "A real live father living with his family in the same house. They're perfect, like on TV!", she exclaims. The explicit connection between Charlotte's grief for her father and the nation's grief for President Kennedy (a nostalgic vein director Richard Benjamin seems keen to tap) brings this conservative under-current into the open.

Such ideological confusion is disappointing in a film based on a woman's novel, adapted by a woman screenwriter (June Roberts, of *Experience Preferred – Not Essential*), with two female producers out of three, and starring one of the more acerbic female stars of recent years. Perhaps it is not surprising, though, given the project's troubled history. After Lasse Hallström withdrew (in his script Kate drowned: "I don't think Americans are gonna like that", Cher is reported to have told him), Frank Oz was drafted in, only to be replaced two weeks into shooting by Richard Benjamin. It is appropriate then that the movie should end with a catch-all effort to accommodate everyone. The Flax family are firmly ensconced in small-town America, but Mrs Flax won't go as far as preparing a 'proper' meal, and she and Charlotte mime happily to a song on the radio. A cop-out ending for a movie that has copped-out from the very beginning.

Tom Charity

Certificate
18
Distributor
Medusa
Production Companies
Castle Rock
Entertainment
In association with
Nelson Entertainment
Producers
Andrew Scheinman
Rob Reiner
Co-producers
Jeffrey Scott
Steve Nicolaides
Production Co-ordinator
Linda Allan-Folsom
Production Manager
Steve Nicolaides
Location Manager
Ido Lampton Enochs Jr
Post-production Co-ordinator
Christy Dimmig
2nd Unit Director
Barry Sonnenfeld
Casting
Jane Jenkins
Janet Hirshenson
Associate:
Michael Hirshenson
Extras:
Sally Lear Casting
Sally Perle Casting
Assistant Directors
Dennis Maguire
Drew Rosenberg
Artist Robinson
Screenplay
William Goldman
Based on the novel by
Stephen King
Director of Photography
Barry Sonnenfeld
Colour
CFL
2nd Unit Photographer
Gary Kibbe
Special Photography
Michele Singer
Camera Operators
M. Todd Henry
Additional:
Chris Squires
Editor
Robert Leighton
Associate Editor
Steve Nevius
Production Designer
Norman Garwood
Art Director
Mark Mansbridge
Art Department Co-ordinator
Jody Levine
Set Design
Stan Tropp
Set Decorator
Garrett Lewis
Special Effects Supervisor
Phil Cory
Special Effects
Hans Metz
Ray Sveden
Music
Marc Shaiman
Music Director
Dennis Dreith
Music Extracts
"Piano Concerto No.1"
by Peter Tchaikovsky,
performed by
Liberace; "Moonlight
Sonata" by Ludwig
van Beethoven,
performed by Liberace



Fan & Faust: Kathy Bates, James Caan

Orchestrations
Dennis Dreith
Additional:
Hummie Mann
Bruce Fowler
Music Editor
Scott Stambler
Songs
"Shotgun" by Autry
DeWalt, performed by
Junior Walker & the
Allstars; "I'll Be Seeing
You" by Irving Kahal,
Sammy Fain,
performed by
Liberace; "Love
Connection" by Larry
Grossman
Costume Design
Gloria Gresham
Costumers
G. Tony Scarano
Oda Groeschel
Make-up Artists
John Elliott
Margaret Elliott
Special Make-up Effects
KNB EFX Group:
Robert Kurtzman
Greg Nicotero
Howard Berger
Rick LaLonde
Bruce S. Fuller
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors
Charles L. Campbell
Donald J. Malouf
Sound Editors
Louis L. Edemann
Richard C. Franklin
Nils C. Jensen
Chuck Neely
Gary Mundheim
ADR
Supervisor:
Larry Singer
Group Co-ordinator:
Leigh French
Foley Editor
James Ashwill
Sound Recordists
Robert Eber
Mark "Frito" Long
Music: Armin Steiner
Foley Recordist
Mary Jo Lang
Sound Re-recordists
Kevin O'Connell
Gregg W. Landaker
Rick Kline
Foley
Taj Soundworks
Artists:
Robin Harlan
Kevin Bartnof
Production Assistants
Joseph G. Popelka
Jim Maguire
Michelle Selleck
Karen Murphy
Lou Anne Harrison
Norris Coit
John Christensen
Robin Warren
Gwen Clancy

Stunt Co-ordinator
David Ellis
Stunts
R.A. Rondell
Sammy Thurman
Sandy Berumen
Steve Hart
Stand-ins
James Dean
Alystar McKenneh
Animal Trainer
Madeline Kline
Helicopter Pilot
Jim Deeth
Cast
James Caan
Paul Sheldon
Kathy Bates
Annie Wilkes
Richard Farnsworth
Sheriff Buster
Frances Sternhagen
Virginia
Lauren Bacall
Marcia Sindell
Graham Jarvis
Libby
Jerry Potter
Pete
Tom Brunelle
Anchorman
June Christopher
Anchorwoman
Julie Payne
Archie Hahn III
Gregory Snegoff
Reporters
Wendy Bowers
Waitress

9,653 feet
107 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Rob Reiner

After completing a new and deeply personal novel at secluded Silver Creek Lodge, in the Colorado Mountains, writer Paul Sheldon crashes in a blizzard and is rescued by ex-nurse Annie Wilkes, the "number one fan" of Sheldon's potboiling romances featuring Misery Chastain. Apparently cut off by a snow drift, Annie nurses the incapacitated Sheldon, but when she is allowed to read his latest manuscript as a reward for her kindness, becomes agitated by its profanity. Meanwhile, at the bidding of Sheldon's agent Marcia Sindell, local sheriff "Buster" begins a search for the missing writer.

Annie returns from a visit to town brandishing a copy of the latest Misery novel, *Misery's Child*. Horrified by a dénouement in which the heroine dies in childbirth, Annie declares Sheldon her prisoner, forces him to burn his recent manuscript, and instructs him to pen a new Misery novel. While Annie is shopping for paper, Sheldon manages to escape from his room and steals a supply of Annie's pills. When Sheldon's smashed car is found, the press announce his death, but Sheriff Buster suspects foul play and searches the *Misery* books for clues. Annie becomes hysterical after reading Sheldon's first chapter, which sidesteps the heroine's death in *Misery's Child*, and demands that he rewrite it, starting with *Misery* in her grave. Foiled in an attempt to poison Annie using her own pills, Sheldon writes furiously over the subsequent weeks while covertly building up his strength. One night, rifling Annie's belongings, he discovers news clippings revealing her to be the "Dragon Lady", a nurse accused of murdering children. He is found out by Annie, who drugs, binds and 'hobbles' him by breaking his ankles.

Meanwhile, checking the newspaper archives, Sheriff Buster recognises a phrase uttered in court by Annie as having been lifted from a Misery novel. He investigates Annie's home and finds Sheldon but is shot by Annie, who has resolved to kill both herself and Sheldon on completion of the novel. That evening, Paul finishes the book, but as Annie sets up his traditional celebratory ritual (champagne, cigarette and a match), he sets the manuscript alight, taunting Annie that the last page revealed the identity of Misery's father. In the ensuing struggle, Paul is shot but clubs Annie with the typewriter then kills her with a sculpted pig. Subsequently, Paul's novel, *The Higher Education of Philip J. Stone*, is lauded by the critics, but he remains haunted by visions of Annie Wilkes.

Having previously achieved one of the few successful adaptations of a Stephen King story with *Stand by Me*, Rob Reiner here turns his attention to the author's most intriguing work with impressive results. King's peculiarly self-reflexive tale neatly reverses the usual reader/writer power relationship to alarming effect. Quite apart from the charming irony by which the deranged fantasies of the anti-heroine are fed not by King-like gore and ghosties but by light romantic pulp fiction, *Misery* is also a neat commentary on the consumerist ethos which spawns such fiction. The theme of imprisonment, implicit in the opening scenes in which the writer tells his agent that he is a slave to his success, is realised more dramatically when Annie Wilkes literally imprisons her idol and forces him to feed her more of the fictional drug on which she depends.

It is here that *Misery's* classic Gothic origins are perhaps clearest - Sheldon has sold his soul to the devil for material gain (the first Misery novel paid for his house, the second for his daughter's dental work, etc.), and in attempting to renege on his side of the bargain, the Faustian hero finds himself dragged off to hell, whence he is banished to dwell in the company of his own personal demon. It is, after all, Annie Wilkes who has indirectly been paying his bills all these years; in some respects, therefore, *Misery* could be read as a tract about the artistic horrors of selling out. Astutely interpreting King's narrative as less a work of horror than a twisted (albeit Gothic) romance, Reiner opts throughout for overtly melodramatic camerawork. Annie's rages are shot in looming close-up, the imprisonment room is displayed from bizarre perspectives, and Reiner shamelessly adopts Hitchcockian techniques which he uses to flawless effect.

If Reiner's visuals border occasionally on pastiche, his editing of the high-tension set-pieces is similarly knowing. The constant use of stylistic parody also facilitates the farcical elements of William Goldman's dialogue, allowing James Caan and Kathy Bates to slip frequently into a beautiful black-comic act. The entirely believable pain suffered by Sheldon throughout adds an almost unbearable tension to the brief scenes of violence, notably the bloodless hobbling scene (devised by Goldman and Reiner to replace King's gaudy blow-torch amputation). "I'm not a big horror fan", Reiner has said, which may be the key to his success in adapting King's writing for the screen. Certainly his astute eye for detail has enabled him to plunder the genre with remarkable aplomb.

Mark Kermode

Over Her Dead Body

Original US title:
Enid Is Sleeping

Certificate
15
Distributor
First Independent
Production Companies
Vestron Pictures
A Davis
Entertainment
Company production
Executive Producers
Mitchell Cannold
Dori Berinstein
Adam Platnick
Producers
John A. Davis
Howard Malin
Co-producer
Bill Brigode
Line Producer
Susan Vogelfang
Associate Producer
Robert Anderson
Darlene K. Chan
Executive in Charge of Production
Scott Kramer
Production Co-ordinator
Lois Walker
Unit Production Manager
Bill Brigode
Location Manager
James R. Maceo
Casting
Janet Hirshenson
Jane Jenkins
New Mexico:
Sally Jackson
Assistant Directors
David Anderson
Patricia Earnest
Catherine Wanek
Barbara M. Ravis
Screenplay
A.J. Tipping
James Whaley
Maurice Phillips
Director of Photography
Alfonso Beato
Colour
DeLuxe
Camera Operators
Monty Rowan
2nd Unit:
Dyanna Taylor
Panaglide:
Gregory A.
Lundsgaard
Editor
Malcolm Campbell
Production Designer
Paul Peters
Art Director
Gershon Ginsburg
Set Decorator
Lynn Wolverton
Set Dressers
John Parker
Ernest Sanchez
Babara Simpson
Selena Lee
Storyboard Artist
Peter Lloyd
Special Effects
Supervisor:
Mike Schorr
Co-ordinator:
Marty Bresin
MB Special Effects
Special Effects
Unlimited

Music
Craig Safan
Orchestrations
Brad Warnaar
Music Editor
Thomas Kramer
Songs
"Stand by Your Man"
by Billy Sherrill,
Tammy Wynette,
performed by Tammy
Wynette; "Mary's
World" by Chip
Klaman, Tony Klaman,
performed by
Blackbird;
"Goonsville" by
Glen Sutton, Harris
Wilson; "Coming
Home" by C. Marshall,
R. Matthurst
Costume
Design:
Lisa Jensen
Supervisor:
Lesley Nicholson
Make-up Artist
Cynthia Barr
Special Make-up Effects
Robert Short
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Supervising Sound Editors
John Leveque
Gordon Ecker
Sound Editors
Bob Bradshaw
James Isaacs
Donald L. Warner
Lucy Coldsnow
Hector Gika
J.H. Arrufat
Kim Secrist
ADR Supervising Editor
Becky Sullivan-
Coblentz
Foley Supervising Editor
Richard E. Yawn
Foley Editors
Shawn Sykora
Scott Jackson
Sound Recordists
John Sutton
Paul Sharpe
Robert J. Glass
Don Digirolamo
Andrea Lakin
Dolby stereo
Sound Effects Co-ordinator
John Michael Fanaris
Sound Effects
Gary Bluffer
Production Assistants
Mathew Dunne (Key)
Jonathan Xavier
Pauline Schaffer
Anton J. Maillie
Ramon Ortega
Ducky Knowlton
Christine Harrison
Chad O'Connor
Jason Tuell
Bernard Dumond
Lanse Kleaveland
Chris Sandoval
Melissa Hammond
Charles Montoya
Stunt Co-ordinator
Gary Davis
Stunts
Michelle Slate
Janet Brady
Thomas J. Huff
Gene McLaughlin
Lewis Dale Meador
Rusty Dillen
Stand-ins
Monty J. Bilberry
Heidi Strickler
Christin Hammack
Kevin Wiggins
Animal Wrangler
Tim Carroll

Cast
Elizabeth Perkins
June
Judge Reinhold
Harry
Jeffrey Jones
Floyd
Maureen Mueller
Enid Purley
Rhea Perlman
Mavis
Brian James
Trucker
Charles Tyner
Man at Indian Burial Site
Henry Jones
Old Man
Michael J. Pollard
Hotel Manager
James Lashly
Gas-station Attendant
Nicholas Love
Alex Chapman
Robbers
Steven Schwartz-Hartley
Fireman
Deenie Dakota
Mary Lou
Maurice Phillips
Cop at Indian Road Sign
Sean Pratt
Joe Bob
Susan Cash
Nether
Paula Johnson
Mrs Hopper
Carlton Beener
Little Harry
Jami Lyn Greenham
Little Enid
Cassy Friel
Little June
Phil Mead
Sheriff
Ann Harris Thornhill
Babs
Chris Yarnell
Kid at Jake's
Owen Lorian
Reporter
Carol Renee
Cleaning Lady
John David Garfield
Cop

9,138 feet
102 minutes

USA 1989

Director: Maurice Phillips

Discovering her policeman husband Harry and her sister June in *flagrante delicto*, Enid Purley grabs a gun, struggles with her husband, and dies when she is hit over the head with a plaster clown by June. Harry reassures his suspicious partner Floyd, and he and June decide to make Enid's death look like an accident. With Enid's body in the passenger seat of their car, June drives out of town, but on arriving at the dangerous curve suggested by Harry for the 'accident', she is waved on by police attending a real accident. Calling at a liquor store to phone Harry, she is pestered by the drunken, lecherous George, whom she violently shrugs off. June drives to an overlook further up the mountain road, where her attempts to roll the car and Enid over the edge are frustrated by a crash barrier.

While Floyd and Harry check out a complaint about a crazy woman at the liquor store, June dumps Enid's body by the roadside, partially burying it when her car gets bogged down in sand. After sending Floyd into a convenience store on the pretext of buying chocolates for Enid, Harry drives off in their squad car. Floyd surprises and shoots one of a pair of store thieves, and Harry pretends to be chasing his fleeing accomplice. After June and Harry put Enid's body in the boot of their car, she checks into a motel. Discovering two 'guests' in her room, the motel manager throws June out. Halted by a tree blocking a bridge, June decides to roll the car containing Enid into the river, but is seen by a young couple on the opposite bank. Floyd and Harry take the call, but when they stop to interview the two witnesses, Harry drives off without his partner. June and Harry drag the car from the river, but on the way back to town, June falls asleep at the



Deeper hurt: Elizabeth Perkins

wheel and careers off the road.

Found by a passing police car, June confesses to murdering her sister; but when she opens the trunk, Enid (who is alive) knocks out the cop with a tyre iron. Having dropped the barely conscious Enid off at home, June is driving towards the police station when the fugitive store thief hi-jacks her car. Spilled petrol from an emergency can is ignited by June's cigarette and the car explodes. Harry arrives on the scene to be told that Enid, whose singed driving licence has been found, is dead. At home, Harry's happiness is cut short when, as a severely burned June appears at the bedroom window, Enid emerges from beneath the bed clothes wielding the tyre iron.

A lamentable black comedy, which might just as easily have been retitled *The Trouble with Enid*, continues the undistinguished career of the scriptwriting team of A. J. Tipping and James Whaley, who were responsible for the puerile British comedy *Car Trouble*. Neither will it do anything to further the career of co-writer and director Maurice Phillips, whose only previous feature was the little-seen *The American Way* (a.k.a. *Riders of the Storm*), a lame political satire starring Dennis Hopper.

On paper, especially with this talented cast, *Over Her Dead Body* must have looked a good prospect, and if nothing else the plotting is admirably coherent. Sadly, the result is neither farcical enough nor sufficiently outrageous to justify the sterling efforts of the cast to inject some much-needed energy into the flatly directed scenes. There is no shortage of frantic screaming and knockabout humour, but the darker elements only surface in quieter, more serious moments.

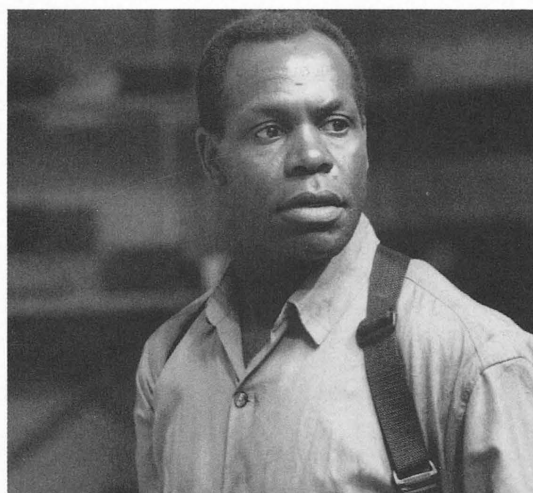
Elizabeth Perkins, for example, makes what she can of those sequences in which she is wrestling with Enid's body and suffering all manner of physical indignities. In her one-way conversations with her dead sister, however, her talk of a miserable childhood and her broken teenage dreams hint at some deeper hurt ("The magic goes don't it, the sparkle?"). By contrast, Judge Reinhold, whose performance in the equally farcical *Ruthless People* was so perfectly pitched, seems here to be straining for laughs. It is possible, though, that this impression is exaggerated by Jeffrey Jones' nicely judged playing of his phlegmatic partner, Lloyd. Amid all the madness and mayhem, Lloyd's calm demeanour and obsession with big-time criminals ("Did you know that seventy-five per cent of Mafia hit men are women?") provide a welcome relief from the high-decibel pitch of most of the humour.

Nigel Floyd

Reviews

Misery
Over Her Dead Body

Certificate
18
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
20th Century Fox
Executive Producers
Michael Levy
Lloyd Levin
Producers
Lawrence Gordon
Joel Silver
John Davis
Co-producers
Tom Joyner
Terry Carr
Associate Producer
Suzanne Todd
Production Executive
Gig Rackauskas
Production Co-ordinator
Karen Penhale
Production Manager
Ed Markley
Unit Production Manager
Tom Joyner
Location Managers
George McDowell
Lisa Blok-Linson
Casting
Jackie Burch
Ferne Cassel
Extras:
Central Casting
Frank Warren
Assistant Directors
Josh McLaglen
J. Tom Archuleta
Chris Gerrity
Screenplay
Jim Thomas
John Thomas
Based on characters created by
Jim Thomas
John Thomas
Director of Photography
Peter Levy
Panavision
Colour
DeLuxe
Optical Photography
Richard Champa
Patrick McDonough
Joseph Iannuzzi
Richard Lorenzo
Animation Photography
Bruce Morosohk
Rick Debbie
Camera Operator
Krishna Rao
Steadicam Operator
Jimmy Muro
Video/Graphic Displays/Predator P.O.V. Effect
Video Image:
Rhonda C. Gunner
Gregory L. McMurray
Richard E. Hollander
John C. Wash
Co-ordinator:
Robert Grasmere
Crew:
John Desjardin
Fred Donelson
Larry Potoker
Antoine Durr
Larry Weiss
Roger Porteous
Caroline Allen
Scott Peterson
Visual Effects
R/Greenberg Associates, Inc
Producer:
Nancy Bernstein
Co-ordinator:
J. W. Kompare
Supervisor:
Joel Hynek
Additional:
Pacific Title
Howard A. Anderson
Company
Charles McDonald
John Nicolard
Visual Concept Engineering



Team effort: Danny Glover...

Optical Effects
Camouflage
Supervisor:
Eugene Mamut
Layout:
Robert Buckles
Janos Mahan
Neil Lawrence
Jim Mini
Kenny Price
Todd Glenn
Technicians:
Edward Gonzalez
Frank Lubelli
Matte Artists
Mark Whitlock
Rocco Giffre
Animation
Steve Marino
Co-ordinator:
Bruce Morosohk
Spark:
Donald Poynter
Computer:
Joseph Francis
Jacques Stroweis
Motion Control
Supervisor:
Chris Nibley
Camera Operator:
John Sullivan
Editors
Mark Goldblatt
Bert Lovitt
Production Designer
Lawrence G. Paull
Art Director
Geoff Hubbard
Set Design
Al Manzen
Richard Mays
Louis Mann
Sally Thornton
Set Decorator
Rick Simpson
Illustrator
Bill Major
Storyboard Artist
Peter Ramsey
Special Effects Supervisor
Ken Pepiot
Special Effects Foremen:
Albert Delgado
Larz Anderson
Crew:
Gary Karas
Wayne Rose
Robert Henderson
Richard Zarro
Gintar Repecka
Joe Montengro
Robert Olmstead

Creature Created By
Stan Winston
Creature Effects
Art Department:
John Rosengrant
(Co-ordinator)
Shane Mahan
(Co-ordinator)
Bill Basso
J.C. Matalon
Beth Hathaway
Len E. Burge III
John Coen
Rob Watson
Ian Stevenson
Mark "Crash"
McCreery
Curt Massof
Bruce Fuller
Adam Jones
Todd Heindel
Dave Grasso
Eileen Kastner-Delago
Kevin Hudson
Mitch Coughlin
Mike Spatola
Karen Mason
Brent Scrivner
Jordu Schell
Dennis Gordon
Mechanical Department:
Richard Landon
(Co-ordinator)
Evan Brainard
Mark Rappaport
Jon C. Price
Guy Himber
Craig Caton
Puppeteers
Bill Basso
Len E. Burge
Craig Caton
Richard
Joseph Landon
Shane P. Mahan
Karen L. Mason
Mark E. McCreery
John Rosengrant
Ian Stevenson

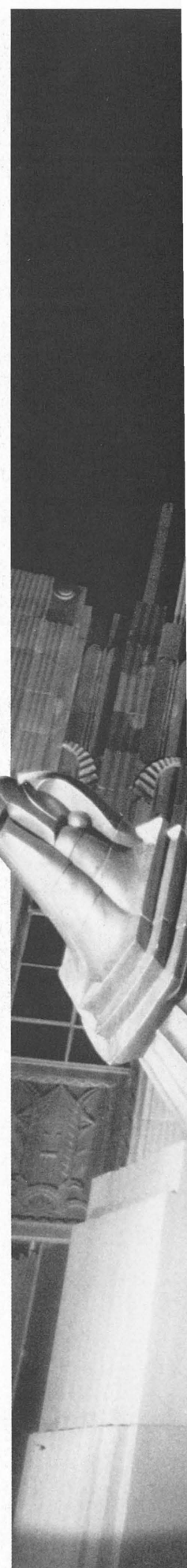
Music
Alan Silvestri
Orchestrations
James B. Campbell
Music Editor
Kenneth Karman
Songs
"En Mi Barrio" by
Michael Sembello,
Gerardo Mejia,
performed by Michael
Sembello; "Young
Gifted and Black",
"Lettin' Off Steam"
by Papa Dee, Karl
"Utopia" McFaul;
"Hypocrites (Dem
Haffi Leave)" by Papa
Dee, The Falcon;
"Fake" by Papa Dee,
Lati Kronlund,
performed by
Papa Dee
Costume Design
Marilyn Vance-Straker
Supervisor:
Dan Lester
Costumers
Key:
Elinor Bardach
Set:
James Cullen
Frances Vega
Alan Martin
Make-up
Design/Creation:
Scott H. Eddo
Supervisor:
Michael Mills
Artist:
Kevin Westmore
Titles
R/Greenberg
Associates
Supervising Dialogue Editor
Gary S. Gerlich
Dialogue Editors
Hal Sanders
Elliott Koretz
Pieter Hubbard
ADR
Supervisor:
William Carruth
Editors:
Bruce Lacey
Ronald Sinclair
Foley Editor
Alan Holly
Sound Recordists
Richard Raguse
Bob Renga
Tim Gomillion
Bill Bateman
Music:
Dennis Sands
ADR Recordists
Charleen Richards
Thomas J. O'Connell
Bruce R. Bell
David N.C. Miranda
Foley Recordist
David Alstadter
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recording
Sergio Reyes
Richard Overton
Chris David
Alex Algarin

Sound Effects
Stephen Hunter Flick
Special Vocal Effects
Norman B. Schwartz
Predator:
Hal Rayle
Foley Artists
Joan Rowe
Greg Barbinell
Police Adviser
Art Fransen
Production Assistants
Susanne Von Euw
Sati Jamal
David G. George
Stephanie
Schwartzman
Dan Gorman
Martin Glover
Stunt Co-ordinator
Gary Davis
Stunts
Mello Alexandria
David Balcorta
Perry Barndt
Kenneth W. Bates
Nathaniel Bellamy Jnr
Janet Brady
Robert C. Brown
Tony Brubaker
David Burton
William H. Burton
Jeff Cadiente
Mike Ceballos
Phil Chong
Gil Combs
Bob K. Cummings
Gregg Dandridge
Gary David
Mike DeLuna
Lionel Douglass
Rick Edwards
Dane Farwell
Lila Finn
Bruce Gantenbein
Cody Glenn
Marian E. Green
Ramiro Gonzalez
Randy Hall
James M. Halty
Gene Hartline
Joy Hooper
Rick Kahana
Dana Mackey
Eric Mansker
Rusty McClennon
Cliff McLaughlin
Gene McLaughlin
Claude Jay McLin
Alan Oliney
Jim Ortega
Manny Perry
Chuck Picerni Jnr
Steve Picerni
James Pruitt
Danny Rogers
J.P. Romano
Patrick Romano
Ronald R. Rondell
Tom Rosales Jnr
Dennis R. Scott
Brian Simpson
Eddie Smith
R. David Smith
Ron Stein
Tierre Turner
William Upton
Phillip Weyland
Arms Specialist
Howard Fannon
Pilots
Alan Purwin
Chuck Tamburro

Cast
Kevin Peter Hall
The Predator
Danny Glover
Harrigan
Gary Busey
Keys
Ruben Blades
Danny
Maria Conchita
Alonso
Leona
Bill Paxton
Jerry
Robert Davi
Heinemann
Adam Baldwin
Garber
Kent McCord
Captain Pilgrim
Morton Downey Jnr
Pope
Calvin Lockhart
King Willie
Steve Kahan
Sergeant
Henry Kingi
El Scorpio
Corey Rand
Ramon Vega
Elpidia Carrillo
Anna
Lilyan Chauvin
Irene Edwards
Michael Mark
Edmondson
Gold Tooth
Teri Weigel
Colombian Girl
William R. Perry
Subway Gang Leader
Alex Chapman
Gerard G. Williams
John Cann
Michael Papajohn
Subway Gang
Lou Eppolito
Patrolman
Charlie Haugk
Charlie
Sylvia Kauders
Ruth
Charles David
Richards
Commuter
Julian Reyes
Juan Beltran
Casey Sander
Pat Skipper
Carmine Zozzora
Federal Team
Valerie Karasek
Chuck Boyd
David Starwalt
Abraham Alvarez
Jim Ishida
George Christy
Lucinda Weist
Reporters
Richard Anthony
Crenna
Billy "Sly" Williams
Paramedics
Paulo Tocha
Nick Corri
Detectives
DeLynn Binzel
Hooker
Tom Finnegan
Patience Moore
Officers
Kashka
Jeffrey Reed
Jamaicans
Carl Pistilli
Cop on Phone
Vonte Sweet
Sweet
Ron Moss
Jerome
Brian Levinson
Anthony
Diana James
Leona's Friend
Beth Kanar
Woman Officer
Paul Abascal
Michael Wiseman
Cops

9,704 feet
108 minutes

big-game hunter
(Kevin Peter Hall)...





USA 1990

Director: Stephen Hopkins

Los Angeles, 1997. Cop Harrigan and his anti-drug task force are caught in the middle of a war between Colombian and Jamaican drug lords. During a battle with the Colombian faction, a mysterious presence intervenes and slaughters the dealers, puzzling the police. The Jamaicans, taking advantage of the power vacuum, move in and attack the Colombian kingpin, but are also taken out by the semi-invisible being. Harrigan is warned by FBI investigator Keyes to stay out of the case, and starts to realise, thanks to a chunk of alien weaponry found in the kingpin's penthouse, that something unearthly is involved. When Danny, a fellow cop, is killed while investigating the crime scene, Harrigan defies Keyes and meets with the Jamaican voodoo drug lord, who is also killed by the monster.

Two other cops, Jerry and Leona, encounter the alien on the subway and Jerry is killed. Harrigan and Leona trail Keyes to a warehouse, where a team of federal agents is preparing to make contact with the creature. Keyes explains that the alien has come to earth to hunt humans for sport, like a creature of the same species which slaughtered a covert operations team in Central America in 1987 (see *Predator*). It only pursues those it sees as the greatest challenge, hence its attraction to trouble spots and heavily armed individuals as prey. Keyes' attempts to avoid the alien's heatsight by wearing body-heat retarding outfits prove fruitless and, despite Harrigan's intervention, the FBI men are killed.

Harrigan takes on the predator and, during a drawn-out combat, tracks it to the spaceship it has concealed under the city. There, using all his own resources, he destroys the creature. A horde of other predators appears, but their leader recognises Harrigan's indomitability and presents him with a souvenir – a flintlock pistol – before departing the planet.

Following in Renny Harlin's footsteps, Stephen Hopkins has graduated from an effectively made but little-seen horror-suspense item (the Australian *Dangerous Games*), and a stylish but empty *Nightmare on Elm Street* entry, to get his first big break on the sequel to a John McTiernan action picture. Hopkins' overkill visual style is also remarkably like Harlin's, both favouring metallic blues, cascades of water, clouds of coloured smoke, sudden explosions and sweaty he-man characters. The premise of the alien big-game hunter that was already hackneyed in the original *Predator* is here combined with currently fashionable rogue-cop

and anti-drugs themes. The result is a machine-tooled piece of undeniable entertainment, which effectively reworks recent s-f and action successes but, like *Die Hard 2*, leaves a distinctly hollow feeling at fadeout.

Its self-referential aspects include the extremely neat in-joke of having the skull of one of the creatures from the *Alien* films on display with the predator's other trophies in his flying saucer, and production designer Lawrence G. Paull provides a variation on the steamy, multi-ethnic, on-the-skids future city he devised for *Blade Runner*. The familiar hardboiled police characters – jokey cut-up Bill Paxton, solemn positive ethnic presence Ruben Blades, ballsy woman Maria Conchita Alonso – are



... Bill Paxton, Maria Conchita Alonso

used to explore the seamy streets and generally hellish conditions of this invented world.

However, with the intervention of the semi-invisible creature, whose shimmering outline is an impressively weird but somewhat overused effect, *Predator 2* gradually transforms into a straightforward body-count picture. A succession of eccentric characters – the strangest of whom is Calvin Lockhart's dreadlocked voodoo priest drug king – wander into the grips of the monster and are colourfully but repetitively disposed of. Given that it's a sequel, the film perhaps wastes too much time on its 'mystery' element as Danny Glover laboriously comes to the conclusion that an alien is behind the murders, and Hopkins works up to the 'shock' revelation of what the creature's face looks like. He also takes advantage of his monster's rampages to stage some striking Grand Guignol tableaux, like the smashed penthouse full of dangling, skinned corpses. But the last reels degenerate further into a conflation of the battles from *Aliens* – as Gary Busey's space-suited team get picked off – and the original *Predator*. The film, however, has a few nicely under-explained touches – like the grizzled old alien's final gift to Harrigan – which usefully suggest a confused universe where things aren't as clean-cut and computer-generated as this hackneyed sequel plot suggests.

Kim Newman

Certificate
15
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Companies
Warner Bros
A Devoted production
Executive Producer
Frederic Golchan
Producer
Robert Greenhut
Bill Murray
Production Co-ordinator
Helen Robin
Production Manager
Joseph Hartwick
Studio Manager
Brian Mannain
Location Manager
Jonathan Filley
Assistant Directors
Thomas Reilly
Richard Patrick
Cynthia Adams
James Greenhut
Screenplay
Howard Franklin
Based on the novel by
Jay Cronley
Director of Photography
Michael Chapman
Colour
DuArt
Prints by Technicolor
Camera Operator
Dick Mingalone
Video
Producer:
Ron Honsa
Engineer:
Howard Weiner
Opticals
The Effects House
Editor
Alan Heim
Art Director
Speed Hopkins
Set Decorator
Susan Bode
Set Dresser
Dave Weinman
Scenic Artists
Master:
James Sorice
Stand-by:
John Wolanczyk
Music
Randy Edelman
Additional:
Howard Shore
Orchestrations
Greig McRitchie
Ralph Ferraro
Music Editor
Thomas Drescher
Songs
"L-O-V-E" by Bert Kaempfert, Milt Gabler, performed by Nat King Cole; "Baila Mi Ritmo" by C. Valdes, B. de Coteaux, performed by Irakere; "Master of Philosophy" by André Acker, Harry Arnold, performed by Awesome Dre' and the Hardcore Committee; "Tive um coracao perdi-o" by Amalia Rodriguez, José Fontes Rocha, performed by Amalia Rodriguez; "Dertix Con fiance (Nakara)" by and performed by Cheb Mami

Costume Design
Jeffrey Kurland
Wardrobe Supervisors
Bill Christians
Patricia Eiben
Jennifer Butler
Make-up Artist/ Clown Design
Peter Montagna
Titles
Balsmeyer & Everett
Opticals
The Effects House
Supervising Sound Editor
Sanford Rackow
Sound Editors
Lou Cerborino
Ahmad Shirazi
Associate:
Kevin Lee
ADR Editor
Deborah Wallach
Sound Recordists
Les Lazarowitz
Michael Bedard
Music:
Chris Tergeson
Ben Rizzi
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Lee Dichter
Sound One Corporation
Production Assistants
Jack Angelo
Justin Moritt
Erika Aronson
Sascha Previn
Stacy Augenstein
Danielle Rigby
Stephanie Bennett
Monty Simons
Andy Bernstein
Matt Weiner
Kevin Hart
Linda Wilson
Michael Levine
Nicholas Wolfert
Mary Ellen Matthews
Stunt Co-ordinator
Frank Ferrara
Stunts
Bill Anagnos
Peter Buccosi
Phil Neilson
John Cenatienpo
Mick O'Rourke
Doug Coleman
Anthony George
Schmidt
Gene Harrison
Jeff Ward

Cast
Bill Murray
Grimm
Geena Davis
Phyllis
Randy Quaid
Loomis
Jason Robards
Chief Rotzinger
Dale Grand Esq
Street Barker
Bob Elliott
Bank Guard
Kimberleigh Aarn
Bank Teller
Ron Ryan
Bank Customer
Brian McConnachie
Bank Manager
Jack Gilpin
Yuppie Hostage
Jordan Cael
Rhe DeVille
J.D. Montalbo
Marya Dornya
Suzen Murakoshi
Barbara Flynn
Anthony T. Paige
Elizabeth A. Griffin
Jane Simms
Connie Ivie
Wendell Sweda
Skipp Lynch
Angel Vargas
Hostages
Richard Joseph Paul
Lieutenant Jameson
Reg E. Cathey
Sound Analyst
William Sturgis
Forensic Detective

Sam Ayers
Esv Commander
Joe Pentangelo
Bill Raymond
Policemen
Randle Mell
TV Reporter
Jamey Sheridan
Mugger
Anthony Bishop
Lary Joshua
Street-sign Workers
Michelle Lucien
Shut-up Lady
Tim Halligan
Deborah Lee
Johnson
Lucia Vincent
Reporters
Elliot Santiago
Manny Siverio
Bicycle Jousters
Bobby Harrigan
Fat Person
Phil Hartman
Mr Edison
Kathryn Grody
Mrs Edison
Tony Shalhoub
Cab Driver
Gary Goodrow
Radio DJ
Frank Maldonado
Ryan Mitchell
Kids at Grocery
Steve Park
Grocery Cashier
Alfa-Betty Olsen
Customer
Jim Ward
Police Artist
Davenia McFadden
Policewoman
Michael Chapman
Michael C. Mahon
Policemen at Grocery
Stanley Tucci
Johnny
Victor Argo
Skelton
Philip Bosco
Bus Driver
Gary Klar
Mario
Paul Herman
Interrogating
Policeman
Stuart Rudin
Man with Guitar
Teodorino Bello
Flower Lady
Barton Heyman
Airport Security Chief
Justin Ross
Airline Clerk
Kurtwood Smith
Russ Crane [Lombino]
Susannah Bianchi
Mrs Russ Crane
[Lombino]
Ira Wheeler
Businessman in Men's
Room
Margo Skinner
Flight Attendant

7,961 feet
88 minutes

USA 1990

Directors: Howard Franklin, Bill Murray

Dressed as a clown, disenchanted New Yorker Grimm holds up a bank, takes the occupants hostage, and gives Police Chief Rotzinger half an hour to provide a city bus, a Harley XL 1000, a monster truck, and two jet ranger helicopters. One hostage will be released for each demand met, and Grimm will telephone Rotzinger regularly to discuss progress. In the bank, the hostages first elect a nervous, bearded man, Loomis, to be set free, and then a feisty young blonde woman who continually abuses the clown. She emerges from the bank with Grimm, himself disguised as a ginger-haired and seemingly panic-stricken fellow captive. Phyllis and Loomis, it turns out, are accomplices in Grimm's plan, with money strapped to their bodies, and they feed false information regarding the siege to the police before slipping into the crowd with Grimm.

In a suburb of Queens, Grimm telephones Rotzinger, pretending to be still inside the bank, but when Loomis accidentally sounds his car horn, the call is identified as coming from outside the bank. With the police in pursuit, the threesome's attempts to reach JFK airport are consistently thwarted: a man whom they ask for directions draws a gun and steals the suitcases containing their change of clothes (but fails to notice the million dollars secreted under their clothes); a visit to Phyllis' apartment results in their illegally parked car being towed away. Having missed their plane to Fiji, the trio's attempts to catch a flight to Martinique are similarly ill-fated. A foreign taxi-driver's inability to speak English drives Loomis to distraction, and he knocks himself out by leaping from the moving cab. Evading the police, the trio blunder into a gangland den, and pass themselves

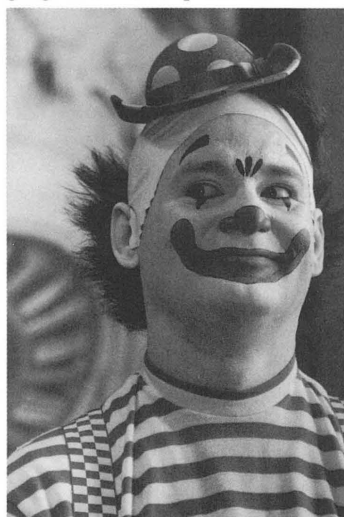
off as the henchmen to Mafia boss Lombino.

Given \$6,000 by the befuddled gangsters, the trio run for a bus as Lombino's real henchman arrives. A chase ensues, and in the chaos the police arrest the gangster whom they mistakenly believe the taxi driver has identified. On the trip to the airport, Grimm gives the \$6,000 to a hippy who is delaying the bus' progress. But Rotzinger (who has finally deciphered the taxi driver's incoherent imprecations) boards the plane to Martinique, causing Lombino and his wife (who are coincidentally aboard) to reveal themselves. With Grimm's help, the triumphant Rotzinger arrests Lombino for the 'clown job', and Grimm, Phyllis and Loomis fly off to Martinique.

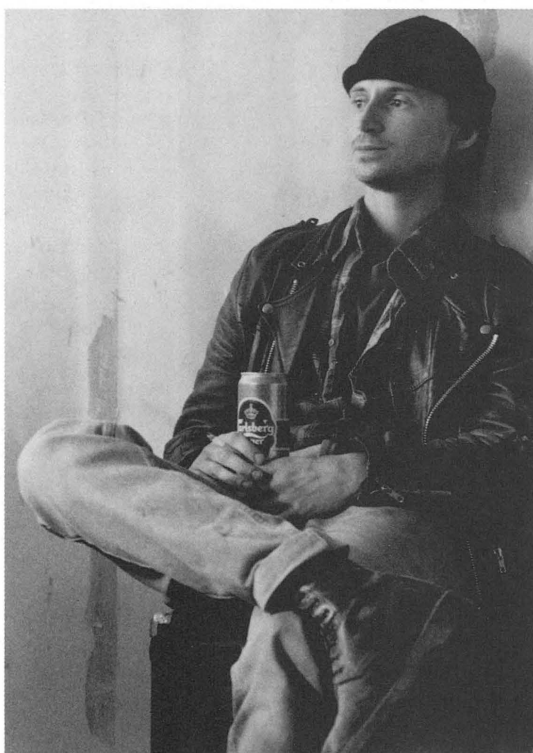
As with so many comic thrillers, the holes in the plot of this unashamed star vehicle are so gaping that one could drive not only a Harley XL 1000 but a school bus, a monster truck and two jet helicopters through them with ease. It is clearly preposterous to suggest that hostages released from an armed siege could so easily evade the police's attentions, or that, had his sidekick not blundered, Grimm would have been able to phone Rotzinger from anywhere in the world while pretending to be still inside the bank. If such narrative inconsistencies are somewhat irritating, the inclusion of an obligatory romantic sub-plot concerning the newly pregnant Phyllis' wavering belief in Grimm's suitability as a long-term partner is equally distracting, and serves merely to waste Geena Davis' remarkable comic talents. Randy Quaid, on the other hand, is allowed to go dismayingly over the top in his quest for wackiness.

Yet despite such major shortcomings, *Quick Change* still delivers the comic goods, which is almost entirely attributable to the durable charm of Bill Murray's trademark dead-pan visage. From the beautiful opening sequence, in which the blank-faced clown plods his weary way through the heaving subway and jostling streets of New York, to the daft dénouement, wherein Grimm gives a false name and address to the police chief who is recommending him for a citation, Murray's sublimely disdainful stare and flat vocal delivery remain a joy. "What the hell kind of clown are you?" asks a bemused hostage in one of the film's finest moments. "The crying on the inside kind, I guess", replies Murray after a weighty pause. That exchange alone perhaps justifies *Quick Change's* existence; the rest is nonsense.

Mark Kermode



Sublimely blank - Bill Murray



Realist mask – Robert Carlyle

Certificate

15

Distributor

BFI

Production Company

Parallax Pictures
For Channel 4

Producer

Sally Hibbin

Production Manager

Deborah Thompson

Location Manager

Tony Clarkson

Assistant Directors

Peter McAleese

Neil Calder

Tommy Gormley

Screenplay

Bill Jesse

Director of Photography

Barry Ackroyd

In Colour

Editor

Jonathan Morris

Production Designer

Martin Johnson

Art Director

Jonathan Lee

Special Effects

Janimals Special
Effects Universal

Music

Stewart Copeland

Songs

"Always on My Mind"

by J. Christopher, M.

Jones, W. Thompson;

"With a Little Help

from My Friends" by

J. Lennon, P.

McCartney; "I'm So

Excited" by T.

Lawrence, A. Pointer;

J. Pointer, R. Pointer;

"Good Morning" by

Nacio Herb Brown,

Arthur Freed; "Won't

You Charleston with

Me" by Sandy Wilson;

"Spread a Little

Happiness" by Gordon

Sumner, Vivian Ellis;

"Everytime I Say

Goodbye" by Cole

Porter; "The Sun Has

Got His Hat On" by

Ralph Butler, Noel Gay

Wardrobe

Wendy Knowles

Make-up

Louise Fisher

Sound Editor

Kevin Brazier

Sound Recordist

Bob Withey

Sound Re-recordist

David Old

Stunts

Andy Bradford

Clive Curtis

Cast

Robert Carlyle

Stevie

Emer McCourt

Susan

Jimmy Coleman

Shem

George Moss

Mo

Ricky Tomlinson

Larry

David Finch

Kevin

Richard Belgrave

Kojo

Ade Sapara

Fiaman

Derek Young

Desmonde

Bill Moores

Smurph

Luke Kelly

Ken Jones

Garrie J. Lammin

Mick

Willie Ross

Gus Siddon

Dean Perry

Wilf

Dylan O'Mahony

Brian Coyle

Stuart Peveril

Youths

Terry Bird

Van Driver

Jimmy Batten

Man Buying Kango

Tracy Brabin

Debra Gillett

Benjamin Lush

Jayne MacKenzie

Johanne Murdock

Singers

David Adler

Director

David Taegar

Producer

Dominic Barlow

Pianist

Terry Duggan

Boss in Office

Angela Morant

Estate Agent

Lila Cherif

Joumana Gil

Zohra El Harrack

Clients

Peter Mullan

Jake

John Kazek

Robert

Anne Marie Timoney

Fiona

Maureen Carr

Ellen

James MacDonald

Funeral Director

Vicky Murdock

Medical Secretary

Mike Haydon

Security Guard

Martin Clapson

Tex Comer

Les Davidson

Jimmy Jewell

Len Stonebridge

Pub Band

3,447 feet

95 minutes

(16mm)

United Kingdom 1990

Director: Ken Loach

Stevie, a young Glaswegian recently released from prison, arrives in London to work on a building site. He joins a crew of itinerant building workers – including Shem, Mo and Larry from Liverpool and several West Indians – in the demolition of an old hospital and its conversion into a block of flats. Despite the efforts of the ganger, Mick, to control them, the men find their own ways of subverting the system.

With nowhere to live, Stevie moves into an empty council flat. Finding a handbag in a skip one day, he traces its owner, Susan, a young Belfast woman who is trying to make a career as a singer. After watching Susan sing with a band in a pub, where the rowdy male audience humiliates her, Stevie takes her back to his flat. Soon afterwards, with the help of his friends on the site, Susan moves in with him, and for a time their relationship prospers. But Stevie, who has ambitions to run a market stall, is increasingly troubled by Susan's apparent inability to organise her life. One morning they have a fierce argument, although they are reconciled when Stevie returns from work to find that Susan has prepared a birthday celebration for him.

When Stevie hears, via a radio SOS message, that his mother has died, Susan vainly pleads with him not to go back to Glasgow for the funeral. Stevie returns from the funeral to find Susan injecting 'smack', and throws her out of the flat. The dubious safety standards on the site are brutally exposed when one of the men, Desmonde, crashes from the roof. That night, an angry Stevie and one of his mates from the site set fire to the paint stock in the now almost completed building, which explodes in flames.

On the surface, *Riff-Raff* appears largely to avoid the dramatic contrivance and political woolliness of *Hidden Agenda*, in style and substance echoing some of Ken Loach's earlier work. The comradeship of the work-place (here a building site), the conspiracy of subversion, the anarchic working-class humour, all hark back to such Loach-Garnett television films of twenty years ago as *The Big Flame* and *Rank and File*. In the meantime, though, these post-80s workers have learned a thing or two from the system about entrepreneurial tricks of the trade. Slotted into this loosely constructed tableau of artisanal community – not without dramatic discomfort – is the film's 'story', which, as in *Looks and Smiles*, builds a central relationship round, but not

from, the scattered bricks of a communal experience. Not for the first time in a Loach film, the frame does not support the construction: the centre does not hold.

The discrepancy is most evident in the visual styles adopted for what obstinately remain the film's two separate strands. The building site sequences are filmed in Loach's naturalistic, improvisational mode (also experiential, since most of the actors – like scriptwriter Bill Jesse, who sadly died just before the film was completed – had previously worked as building labourers). Actors drift in an out of shot as the 'mood' of the scene takes them, caught in dimly heard mid-sentence or delivering obviously rehearsed jokes straight to camera ("Every time you open your mouth it's like a bleedin' parliamentary debate", says one of the workers of another, a characteristically politicised Liverpoolian who pleads the case for better safety standards on the site).

Loach's persistent confusion of 'realism' (a literary/dramatic convention, by which no television-bred audience is confused) with real life (what you see is how it is) has the opposite effect of that presumably intended: it simply draws attention to the artifice of these scenes. *Riff-Raff* was made for television, though happily it has a prior if limited cinema release. But will television audiences, accustomed to seeing through the 'realist' masks of *Coronation Street* or *EastEnders*, be seduced by the unfocused naturalism of sporadic scenes from a building site?

As always in Loach's films – even a 'lighter' work such as this – there is of course a hidden agenda. Or not so hidden. "Depressions are for the middle classes", says Stevie to his hopeless girlfriend, "The rest is about an early start in the morning". Stevie, in other words, who dreams of opening a stall selling boxer shorts, has half swallowed the go-for-it market philosophy of contemporary Britain, while deadbeats like Susan are left to busk for pennies in the Underground.

Book-ending this simplistic morality, the film begins with a crashingly obvious symbol of something or other, as rats scurry through the debris of a demolition site; and ends with the selfsame rats scuttling through the floors of the nearly completed block of luxury flats, which has just been fired by the hero and his mate as an act of vengeance for the death of a comrade who fell from inadequately secured scaffolding. As ye sow... But what do you reap, except a confused and condescending view of kicking the system in impotent despair?

David Wilson

Distributor
Channel 4
Production Company
Working Title Films
In association with
Channel 4 Television
Producers
Sarah Cellan Jones
Alison Jackson
Production
Co-ordinator
Winnie Wishart
Location Manager
Mark Scantlebury
Casting
Suzanne Crowley
Gilly Poole
Assistant Directors
Waldo Roeg
Max Keene
Sholto Roeg
Screenplay
Tunde Ikoli
Screenplay
Supervisor
Glenys Davies
Director of Photography
Peter Sinclair
Colour
Technicolor
Editor
Angus Newton
Production Designer
Hugo Luczyc-
Wyhowski

Art Director
Frank Walsh
Special Effects
Supervisor
Alan Whibley
Music by and
Arranged by
Colin Towns
Costume Design
Sheelagh Killeen
Wardrobe Supervisor
Louise Page
Make-up
Sunetra Sastry
Designer:
Fae Hammond
Titles
Tracy Drew
Sound Editor
Andrew Glen
Sound Recordist
Albert Bailey
Sound Re-recordist
Peter Maxwell
Stunt Co-ordinator
Jim Dowdall

Cast
Charlie Caine
Abel
Rosalind Bennett
Elizabeth
Patrick Malahide
Dirk-Brown
Connie Booth
Ms Kane
Rudolph Walker
Churchill
John Elmes
Edward
James Saxon
Wilks
Geoffrey Palmer
Sir Horace Wimbol
Trevor Laird
Baron Greenback
Thomas Craig
Spikey
Robin Summers
Bill
Peter McNamara
Ben
Steve Sweeney
Ariel
Walter Sparrow
Waggy
Yemi Ajibade
Pedro
Gina McKee
Lucy Lisle
Jane Wood
Mildred
Lloyd Anderson
Walter
Ann Morrish
Lady Wimbol
Paul Stacey
Justin
Cindy O'Callaghan
Marlene
Jim Barclay
Man in Wine Bar
Paul Arlington
Drunk
Brian Hall
Detective
Ron Davies
Desk Sergeant
Ade Ikoli
Nicola Ikoli
Mildred's Children

8,100 feet
90 minutes

United Kingdom 1990

Director: Tunde Ikoli

Abel, black East End wide boy and ex-con now going straight, is cleaned out in a gambling den run by Churchill. Meanwhile, mixed-race rent boy Ariel steals a briefcase from an MP after servicing him in a public toilet. The MP's villainous associates set out to retrieve the case's valuable contents, and when it passes into Abel's hands, he becomes their quarry after they have murdered Ariel. Fellow impoverished gamblers Baron Greenback and Spikey try unsuccessfully to interest Abel in a raid on a post office, but his fingerprints wind up on a gun which the pair eventually use.

East End gangster turned respectable businessman Dirk-Brown is particularly eager to recover the briefcase, because it contains the details of a deal he is negotiating with a powerful American interest represented by Ms Kane. Abel discovers from the documents how the deal is being arranged by the eminent Sir Horace Wimbol, who turns out to be in league with Ms Kane against Dirk-Brown, to the point even of scheming to murder him.

Abel decides to burgle Sir Horace's plush London address, hoping to make up his gambling losses. Instead he encounters the rich man's heroin-addict daughter, Elizabeth, about to overdose, and after he saves her life they strike up a romantic relationship. Pursued by the gangsters after the briefcase, and by police investigating the post-office raid, Abel and Lizzy retreat to Churchill's country cottage, where Lizzy overcomes her addiction with Abel's help.

When Abel is arrested because of his connection with the raid, Lizzy blackmails her father over his involvement in the Dirk-Brown deal, obtaining money and Abel's release. The pair are reunited and look forward to a happy future.

There are no surprises in this thriller-cum-love story, unless there is still shock value in having a black man as the hero in mainstream film or television drama. Even then, Brian Bovell in the BBC's *Blood Rights*, and Denzil Washington's recent work, should have properly attuned the audience for Tunde Ikoli's film. Similarly, a plot offering the usual mix of backhanders and bombs, dirty-dealing and drugs, gangster-businessmen and homosexual MPs, and which moves from working-class estate to upper-class mansion, from Docklands development to country cottage, will not trouble a viewing public raised on *The Bill*, *Capital City* and *Inspector Morse*. None of this is an objection; it is a strength of Ikoli's film that he has so adeptly mastered the conventions of the genre on his first try.

There are necessarily dangers in a film where most of the black characters are criminal to some degree, though in this illicit under- and over-world, the whites are as consistently tainted. And there is no white character to match the straightforward innocence of Yemi Ajibade's Pedro, who offers to fetch a Lemsip for a junkie sneezing her way through the first stages of cold turkey.

The main strength of *Smack and Thistle*, however, lies in the two central performances. Charlie Caine has the makings of a black hero for the 90s: as a gentleman-villain, his acting is understated and engaging, perfectly complemented by the wayward – if familiar – combination of junkie, society princess and lovesick fool portrayed by Rosalind Bennett. She plays an inherently unsympathetic character with sufficient conviction to carry the shift that occurs about a third of the way through, when the thriller gives way to the love story.

Ikoli has not quite realised his ambition "to make films which are relevant to black people, films which black people would come and see". Times have changed since the days of *Shaft*. Black audiences want not just any black image, but one which departs from the usual preconceptions of blacks as comics and villains. But *Smack and Thistle* deserves and undoubtedly will get a large audience. To have produced so stylish a vehicle for today's black acting talent, and his own, is the challenge Ikoli has met in this television film. Just as importantly, he has prepared audiences for upcoming work from other black film-makers – work like Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels*, another Film on Four – which will perhaps challenge more deeply preconceptions about black people in Britain.

Karen Alexander

For the 90s:
Charlie Caine,
Rosalind Bennett



Il sole anche di notte (Night Sun)

Certificate
12
Distributor
Artificial Eye
Production Companies
FilmTre/
Raiuno
Radiotelevisione
Italiana (Rome)
Capoul/Interpool/Sara
Film (Paris)
Direkt Film (Munich)
Executive Producer
Grazia Volpi
Producer
Giuliani G. de Negri
Production Executives
Jacques Bourdon
Alberto Passone
Production Organiser
Claudio Grassetto
Production Managers
Rita Di Tommaso
Raffaella Veneruso
Casting
Francesco Cinieri
Germany:
Risa Kes
Screenplay
Paolo Taviani
Vittorio Taviani
Based on the story
"Father Sergius"
by Leo Tolstoy
Screenplay
Tonino Guerra
Collaborator
Dialogue
Claude Veillot
Adapter:
Filippo Ottoni
Director of Photography
Giuseppe Lanci
Technovision
Colour
Eastman Colour
Camera Operator
Fabio Conversi
Steadicam Operator
Nicola Pecorini
Editor
Roberto Perpignani
Art Director
Gianni Sbarra
Set Design
Osvaldo Desideri
Dresser
Maura Zuccherofino
Wall Hangings
Enrico Sanchini
Music/Music Director
Nicola Piovani
Music Performed by
Unione Musicisti
Romani
Costume Design
Lina Nerli Taviani
Make-up
Alessandro Iacononi
Sound Editor
Frank Jahn
Sound Recordists
Danilo Sternini
Music:
Sergio Marcotulli
Dolby stereo



Charlotte Gainsbourg, Julian Sands

Cast
Julian Sands
Sergio Giuramondo
Charlotte Gainsbourg
Matilda
Nastassja Kinski
Cristina
Massimo Bonetti
Prince Santobuono
Margarita Lozano
Sergio's Mother
Patricia Millardet
Aurelia
Rudiger Vogler
King Charles III
Pamela Villoresi
Giuseppina
Giuramondo
Geppy Gleijeses
Bishop
Sonia Gessner
Duchess Del Carpio
Gaetano Sperandeo
Gesuiuno
Matilde Piana
Peasant Woman
Vittorio Capotorto
Matilda's Father
Riccardo Patrizio
Perrotti
Duke Del Carpio
Salvatore Rossi
Eugenio
Teresa Brescianini
Concetta
Biagio Barone
Father Biagio
Ferdinando Murolo
Lawyer

Aleksander Mincer
Organ Player
Ubaldo Lo Presti
Minister
Carlo Luca De Ruggieri
Gesuiuno's Son
Maria Antonia Capotorto
Livia
Marco Di Stefano
Officer in Coach
Lorenzo Perpignani
Sergio as a child
Morena Turchi
Giuseppina as a child
Giovanni Cassinelli
Cristina's Younger Brother
Antonella Visini
Cristina's Younger Sister
Voices
Giancarlo Giannini
Father Sergio
Anna Cesareni
Aurelia
Ilenia Stagni
Matilda
Paola Mannoni
Sergio's Mother

10,184 feet
113 minutes

Subtitles

Italy/France/Germany 1990

Directors: Paolo Taviani, Vittorio Taviani

In eighteenth-century southern Italy, a young nobleman, the Baron Sergio Giuramondo, is selected by King Charles III to become his new *aide-de-camp*, despite his humble provincial origins. To help him gain acceptance within the court, the king arranges a marriage with the beautiful Cristina, the young Duchess Bel Carpio. But the night before the wedding, Sergio discovers that Cristina has been the king's mistress, and he flees Naples in grief.

He decides to become a monk, but his search for "inner and outer spiritual perfection" leads him to leave the monastery and become a hermit on Mount Petra. He is visited by an elderly couple who remember him as a child, and declare that their only wish is to die at the same time because they cannot imagine life without each other. One night, a beautiful young adventuress, Aurelia, bets a group of her friends that she can seduce the handsome Sergio in his refuge. Strongly tempted, he only manages to resist by cutting off his finger with an axe. Aurelia runs away, horrified, and the story of the young hermit's strength and devotion spreads.

Soon, the local people begin to believe that Sergio has special powers and that to be touched by his mutilated finger can work miracles. The belief is confirmed when a young dumb child manages to speak after meeting Sergio, and pilgrims flock from all over Italy to be blessed by him. Gradually, the church builds a shrine and renovates Sergio's lonely shack, much to his displeasure. He feels increasingly isolated and dreams of joining the local shepherds.

One pilgrim, Matilda, a disturbed young girl, is taken to Sergio to cure her melancholy disposition, but while they are alone, she manages to seduce him. In despair, Sergio flees

and tries to commit suicide by drowning, but his will to live proves too strong. Finally, he returns to the land of his childhood and discovers a family where the elderly couple used to live. The new tenants tell him that the couple did indeed die within seconds of each other. Sergio walks away, never to be heard of again.

The Tavianis are masters of the film-as-fairy-tale, concocting moments of magic and fantasy with an irresistible mix of visual beauty and narrative whimsy. But *Night Sun*, adapted from Tolstoy's tale "Father Sergius", and a hauntingly spiritual film which is never afraid to explore the unfashionable themes of longing, solitude and meditation, is made of more sober stuff. Its inspiration was the Tavianis' wish to work on two contemporary stories about Italy after terrorism; during the project, the brothers were struck by the theme of detachment and the need to step back from the world to discover its deeper truths, and they returned to Tolstoy's fable, which had first attracted their interest ten years previously.

Sergio (Julian Sands), a young Italian nobleman, is proud, intense and honest - all qualities which attract him to the king, who orders his promotion. But the night before his wedding to Cristina (Nastassja Kinski) he learns that she has been the king's mistress and, sickened by the pair's hypocrisy, he decides to leave Naples and become a monk. He makes a model priest in many ways, but still fails to live up to his own ideal of spiritual perfection and leaves the monastery to become a hermit. And from here, after a gentle, non-committal start, the film takes on a harsher, more abrasive tone as Sergio's quest, ever more obsessive, ever more tortured, unfolds. The windswept landscape is shot in stony, severe colours (one thinks of Tarkovsky), while Sands, exploiting his very un-English intensity of gaze, manages to ►



Pomp and celebration

Reviews

Smack and Thistle
Il sole anche di notte

◀ convey the fallen arrogance of one who always wants more but increasingly realises that the answer lies in a different direction.

The film's dramatic core is contained in two incidents, both of which involve women. First Aurelia (Patricia Millardet), a young adventuress, bets her friends that she can seduce Sergio. She arrives alone at his shack one night pretending to be lost. Sergio, obliged by the foulness of the weather to let her in, is deeply disturbed by her flirtatiousness and the effect she has on him. As she disrobes for the night, he turns away to pray that God let him hear only the rain battering outside, but to no avail; the harder he prays, the more distinctly he hears the rustling of Aurelia's stockings being mischievously unrolled behind him. Finally, to avoid succumbing to his visitor, Sergio cuts off his finger with an axe; the story spreads throughout the country and the hermit (and his finger) is deemed to have miraculous powers.

But there is power and power. The organised church, with its pomp and unobtrusive sense of celebration, is not slow to mark Sergio's achievement, leaving him lonelier than he was before. In this fragile mood, he receives Matilda (Charlotte Gainsbourg), a melancholic adolescent girl who, in a much more direct way, succeeds where Aurelia failed when the two are left alone. Horrified, Sergio flees and tries to commit suicide, but his attempt to end life is as fruitless as his efforts to make sense of it.

The nostalgia of Sergio's return to his homeland is conveyed with dignity and restraint, as he trudges back to find an elderly couple to whom he has remained close all his life. He discovers they have died, but their long-held wish that they should die at exactly the same time has been granted. Sergio walks away, never to be seen again; his spiritual voyage has come full circle. As nobleman, he is judged "too sentimental" to be a soldier; as monk, he remains too attached to his pride; as miracle worker and saint, he begs to be "kept away from earthly glory" while monuments to his honour are built all around him; as man, succumbing to human weakness, he is denied the chance to escape by choosing death.

The "night sun" of the title, the longing for light in the midst of surrounding darkness, cannot be found by illusion and trickery; it is a painful quest full of suffering and uncertainty. This is the film Martin Scorsese might have made with his equally intense *The Last Temptation of Christ*, but then he wasn't born in the land of Leonardo and Fra Angelico. The Tavianis exploit their heritage well indeed.

Peter Aspden

Tatie Danielle

A precise
mockery:
Eric Pratt,
Catherine Jacob

Certificate
15
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production
Companies
Téléma/FR3/Les
Productions du
Champ Poirier.
With the
participation of Sofica
Investimage, Sofica
Créations, Sofimage,
Image Investissements
Producer
Charles Gassot
Production Manager
Volker Lemke
Location
Philippe Renucci
Jean-Pascal Chalarid
Casting
Romain Brémont
Assistant Directors
Patricia Eberhard
Frédéric Blum
Philippe Chapus
Gilles Loutfi
Screenplay
Florence Quentin
Adapted by
Florence Quentin
Etienne Chatiliez
Director of
Photography
Philippe Welt
In colour
Camera Operator
Pascal Gennessaux
Editor
Catherine Renault
Production Designer
Geoffroy Larcher
Set Design
Pascal Graffin
Set Dresser
Radja Zeggai
Special Effects
Gilbert Lucido
Music
Gabriel Yared
(Sirtaki) Gérard
Kawczynski
Songs
"La complainte de la
vieille salope" by
Gabriel Yared,
Florence Quentin,
Catherine Ringer,
performed by
Catherine Ringer;
"The Vilja Song" from
The Merry Widow by
Franz Lehár; "Shake
Shake Shake (Shake
Your Body)" by Casey
Finch; "Ça sent la
messe" by Philippe
Chatiliez

Choreographer
(Sirtaki) Dimitri
Chalzonitis
Costume Designer
Elisabeth Tavernier
Key Make-up Artist
Jasmine Nakache
Sound Recordists
Guillaume Sciarra
Dominique Dalmasso
Sound Re-recorder
Joëlle Dufour
Post-synch
Jacques Lévy
Sound Effects
Laurent Lévy
Animal Trainer
Pierre Cadeac (Animal
Vision)

Cast
Tatiana Chelton
Auntie Danielle
Catherine Jacob
Catherine Billard
Isabelle Nanty
Sandrine
Neige Dolsky
Odile
Eric Pratt
Jean-Pierre Billard
Laurence Fèvre
Jeanne Billard
Virginie Pradal
Madame Lafosse
Mathieu Foulon
Jean-Marie Billard
Gary Ledoux
Jean-Christophe
("Totoff")
André Wilms
Doctor Wilms
Patrick Bouchitey
Beggars
Christine Pigner
Woman Taxi Driver
Evelyn Didi
Woman Bus Driver
Isabelle
Petit-Jacques
Passer-by
Karine Viard
Agathe
Jacqueline Dufranne
Madame Ladurie
Dominique Mac Avoy
Madame Lemoine
Pierre Jean
Monsieur Lemoine
Bradley Harriman
Michael
Madeleine Cheminat
Madame Mauprivet
Nicole Chollet
Ginette Mauprivet
Delphine Quentin
Nurse (Camille)
Claire Marsden
Nurse (Frédérique)
Olivier Saladin
Butcher
Lorella Cravotta
Butcher's Wife
Jean-Pierre Miquel
Hospital Doctor
Nadia-Marthe
Barentin
Nurse (Suzanne)

Brigitte Saint-Léon
Nurse (Sylvie)
Patricia Eberhard
Nurse (Lydia)
Anne-Marie Râteau
Hospital Nurse
Françoise Billet
Doctor's Assistant
Frédéric Rossif
Man with Ducks
Josephine Sourdel
Madame Langman
Jean Chesnel
Monsieur Burène
Catherine Jan
Madame Burène
Monique Pantel
Woman in Flats
François-Régis
Marchasson
Passer-by
Marina
Rodríguez-Tomé
Concierge
Josette Guibert
Old Woman
Francis Boespflug
Gilles Loutfi
Journalists
Marie-France
Cubadda
Jean-Jacques Dufour
TV Reporters
Denis Barbier
Park Keeper
Madeleine Antoine
Old Lady in Park
Christophe
Malbranque
Jean-Marie's Friend

10,076 feet
112 minutes
Subtitles

France 1990

Director: Etienne Chatiliez

● Auntie Danielle is an elderly widow living in the provincial town of Auxerre. She is mean and tyrannical towards her aged maid Odile, and she heartily dislikes her relatives (great-nephew Jean-Pierre Billard, his wife Catherine and their two sons, Jean-Christophe and Jean-Marie, as well as Jean-Pierre's sister Jeanne). She confides her thoughts aloud to a portrait of her deceased husband Edouard. When Odile dies from a fall for which Danielle is partly responsible, the latter goes to live with her family in Paris.

The Billards' patience is sorely tried by life with Danielle, who hates the food they give her, is bored by the outings they organise, scoffs at gifts and wilfully loses their younger son in a park. The war of attrition escalates: Danielle makes herself sick on purpose and wets her nightgown in the presence of the Billards' dinner party guests. When the Billard family goes on holiday to Greece, a home help, Sandrine, is hired to look after the old woman. Danielle tries to bully Sandrine into submission, but soon discovers that her tactics do not work.

Sandrine and Danielle strike up a friendship of sorts, though Danielle refuses Sandrine's request for a night off. Sandrine goes out all the same and, out of spite, Danielle wrecks the apartment, smears herself with filth, eats dog food and sets the place on fire. Rescued, she becomes an overnight celebrity, while her relatives (still in Greece) are branded on TV and by the neighbours as uncaring monsters. After the scandal dies down, Danielle is sent to an old people's home, where she tyrannises other female inmates. One Sunday, however, she vanishes; she and Sandrine are discovered having a great time at a skiing resort.

● In the late 60s, Simone de Beauvoir wrote: "Old age is a





Head-on: Tilla Chelton

problem on which all the failures of society converge. And this is why it is so carefully hidden". Times are changing, it seems, when a 1990 mainstream French comedy can tackle old age head-on via a cantankerous eighty-two-year-old heroine who behaves spectacularly badly. *Tatie Danielle* is the second feature by Etienne Chatiliez, the director of the hugely successful *La Vie est une longue fleuve tranquille* (*Life Is a Long Quiet River*). The director again shows expert handling of his excellent cast of relative unknowns, employing some of the same actors in cameos and Catherine Jacob (the maid in *Life*) as Catherine Billard. Chatiliez's use of comedy to send up aspects of contemporary French society is closer to Bertrand Blier

than Eric Rohmer in its focus on the grosser facets of life in 90s France. This is not the quaint and romantic France so beloved of the British: people eat frozen convenience-foods, watch American soaps dubbed into French, read Barbara Cartland, and go on holiday in a Club-Med-type village in Greece complete with "reconstructed Cretan chapel".

Yet for French audiences, *Tatie Danielle* hits many familiar sore spots, such as the legendary meanness of the French provincial bourgeoisie and their obsession with inheritance, explored in literature since Balzac. The hypochondria of a medicine-obsessed, doctor-worshipping nation ("You know the doctor says no sugar") is touched on, as are racist habits like training dogs to attack black

postmen. Most sensitive of all, the film tackles the issue of how an increasingly aging population is to be dealt with, given the vicissitudes of hectic urban life: in other words, what is to be done with inconvenient grannies (and dogs). The dog is disposed of in classic Parisian fashion by being left by the roadside. As for the granny, her destiny appears to be the old people's home with its horror stories of emotional deprivation and out-of-control bodily functions.

This bleak and unflattering picture is unusual in French comedies, which have by and large invoked the nostalgic and the cute rather than the grotesque (as in the work of Jacques Tati, for example, or recent films like *Trois hommes et un couffin*/*Three Men and a Cradle* and

Romuald et Juliette). Etienne Chatiliez, however, touches on aspects of social reality most of us would rather not see on the screen, while still being extremely funny. This comedy – for instance, in the moment when Sandrine slaps Danielle, and in the scenes in the old people's home – has affinities with the post-68 vitriolic humour of cartoonists like Reiser, who drew memorably mean OAPs and alcoholic wrecks. And yet, in the end, cuteness resurfaces, in the fantasy ending, for instance, or in the occasional transformation of Danielle from vile 'bitch' to the naughty girl who eats too many cream cakes and makes faces behind people's backs.

More fundamentally, Chatiliez's decision to extend the film's derision to all the characters, leaving no positive point of identification – except possibly the working-class Sandrine – defuses the impact of his satire. It is also unfortunate that the mockery, often very precise and sociological, as with the Billards' petit-bourgeois tastes (their clothes, their passion for trendy cuisine, their language), has its reactionary side in, for instance, the treatment of the older son's homosexuality.

Ultimately, the film cannot decide whether Danielle is an ungrateful virago, the bane of a well-meaning (if silly) family, or a subversive *vieille dame indigne*, an unruly older woman who flies in the face of convention. The ending, in which Danielle is rescued from the old people's home by Sandrine, seems to favour the latter interpretation, but the rest of the film does not really support this. There is little explanation offered as to why an old woman should behave in such a manner, even though this is a film scripted by a woman and almost entirely played out between women, in which men are either dead (Danielle's husband) or absent from the screen. Catherine is seen at work in her beauty parlour (where she specialises in hair removal), for example, but her husband is not. It is the women who discuss, and tackle, the problem of caring for the elderly.

There are hints that sexual frustration, alluded to in the words of the song heard over the titles, the "Ballad of an Old Bitch", and echoed in her passion for Barbara Cartland novels and TV soaps, may be one cause for Danielle's behaviour. In the old people's home near the end, the image of Danielle gazing out of the window for hours chimes with earlier shots of her peering from behind her curtains at the outside world, evoking a wasted life of appalling emotional isolation. Despite its upbeat ending, this dark quality casts enough of a shadow to make *Tatie Danielle* bitter rather than sweet.

Ginette Vincendeau



Peter O'Toole – to each his own oblivion...

Certificate

15

Distributor

Gala

Production Company

First Floor Features

Producers

Laurens Geels

Dick Maas

Production Supervisor

Wim Lehnhausen

Production Manager

Jean-Patrick

Costantini

Location Managers

Lex Rodenberg

France:

Frederic Bovis

Noel Eosta-Coquelard

Belgium:

Benoît van Wambeke

Post-production Co-ordinator

Hans van Dongen

Casting

USA:

Mike Fenton

United Kingdom:

Jeremy Zimmerman

Germany:

Risa Kes

Co-ordinator:

Angela Dekker

Consultant:

Dorna X. van

Ronveroy

Associate Consultant:

Alma Bellard (France)

Extras:

Peter Rabbél

Edward Koldewijn

Assistant Directors

Tamar Baruch

Michael Zimbrich

Ken Shane

Simon Moseley

France:

Christian Falzon

Screenplay

Otakar Votocék

Herman Koch

Additional

Consultant:

Dirk Groeneveld

Director of Photography

Alex Thomson

Colour

Agfa

2nd Unit

Photographer

Michel Bandour

Special Visual Effects

Fotberley Ltd

Brian Johnson

Stuart Galloway

Wolfgang Lempp

Graphic Designer

Ronald Timmermans

Editor

Hans van Dongen

Production Designer

Dick Schillemans

Art Director

Peter Jansen

Set Decorator

Rikke Jelier

Set Dressers

Hans Voors

Anja Geels

Draughtsman

Roland Mylanus

Special Effects

Arrangers

Martin Gutteridge

Graham Lomghurst

Effects Association

Music

Paul van Brugge

Source:

Jacob Klaasse

Songs

"L'Amour partira

demain" by Jannick

Top, Serge Peratbener,

performed by Marie

Trintignant

Costume Design

Yan Tax

Wardrobe

Marie Lambers

Make-up Artists

Paul Engelen

Karin van Dijk

Titles/Opticals

Image Creations

Dialogue Editor

Mark Glynn

Foley Editor

Danniel Danniel

Sound Recordists

Georges Bossaers

Ad Roest

Music:

Tjeerd van Zanen

Dolby stereo

Foley Recordist

Jan van Sandwijk

Sound Effects Editor

Bert Flantua

Foley Artist

Hans Walter Kramski

Production Assistants

Esmé Davidson

Judy de Vos

Gabi van der

Steenstraten

Stef Bakker

Theo Calis

Stunt Co-ordinator

Bill Weston

Wayne Michaels

Tracey Eddon

Nick Gillard

Nick Hobbs

Billy Horrigan

Tim Lawrence

Jason White

Stand-ins

Colin Firth:

Jos Veldhuizen

Marie Trintignant:

Janine Symkowiak

Cast

Peter O'Toole

Cesar Valentin

Colin Firth

Brian Smith

Marie Trintignant

Bianca

Ellen Umlauf

Aristida

Andréa Ferréol

Theresa

Maria Becker

Dr Frisch

Gottfried John

Zlatogorski

Walter Gotell

Receptionist

Ken Campbell

Head Waiter

Robert Stephens

Merrick

Terry Raven

Mystic

Nicolas Chagrin

Delgado

Luc Boyer

Kobayashi

Jürgen Schornagel

Architect

Michiel Romeyn

Baldesari

Remo Rostagno

Volodja

Mark Tandy

Composer

Bernard Fontaine

Ferryman

Eva Kryll

Birgit

Klaus Kelterbon

Gunther

Dagmar Schwarz

Beate

Dagmar Warnett

Herman Laue

Jonathan Hackett

Emilio Linder

Pat Roach

Jerry di Giacomo

Bruno Eieron

Eric Fostinelli

Robert Derame

Michael Krass

Grant Coburn

Josyane Cianelli

Monne de Vivier

Tina van Baren

Michael Harrican

Luc Walter

Gylan Kain

Ian Elliot

Patrick le Barz

Jean Jacques Delbo

Stacey Whorton

Adam Fresco

Harry Barrowclough

Mary Donovan

Richard Graydon

David Doyle

Joe Weston

Keith Adrian

Juri Voogd

Colin Scott

Sander Bronwer

9,814 feet

109 minutes

Filmed in English

Netherlands 1990

Director: Otakar Votocék

Convinced that veteran film star Cesar Valentin has plagiarised his work for his own autobiography, unknown writer Brian Smith trails the star at a film festival and mortally shoots him as he arrives for a gala screening. As he tries to get away, Smith falls to his death. Subsequently, the two men find themselves being ferried to an island, where they are taken to a luxury hotel and given rooms according to their status in life. They discover that the hotel's guests are dead celebrities who are allowed to stay as long as their fame survives in the land of the living. As they are forgotten, they are relegated to progressively less well-appointed rooms until the time comes for them to be cast adrift in the oblivion of the sea.

Still mutually hostile, Valentin and Smith play a cat-and-mouse game as the conceited Valentin tries to discover why Smith wanted to kill him and Smith remains reluctantly intrigued by Valentin's movie career. Smith is also intrigued by another guest, pop singer Bianca (whose fame rests on a single hit record), and consults celebrated psychoanalyst Dr Frisch about the possibility of love after death.

As their fame recedes, both Valentin and Smith are moved to a dingy room in the hotel basement. When the time comes for decisions about their continuing residence, the hotel manager assembles all the guests. Valentin and Smith are among those selected for oblivion, but Smith wins a lottery game whose prize is a return to life. Asked to choose one other guest to go with him, Smith hesitates... But he and Valentin are inexorably linked in death, and it is Valentin who joins him back in life in a European city which is hosting a retrospective of his films. Valentin is dismayed that hardly anyone is watching the films, and Smith contrives a moment of public recognition for the now almost forgotten star.

Wings of Fame has the air of a project as doomed as its characters, marooned as they are in a limbo land of diminishing prospect. A first feature by the Netherlands-based Czech director Otakar Votocék, it never manages to breathe life into its still-born thematic premise. The script, which bears all the signs of having been worked over to bruising effect, seems implicitly to acknowledge its built-in narrative stasis by contriving a happy end of sorts for its mismatched protagonists. Unlike Sartre's *Huis Clos*, from which the film clearly derives some inspiration, there is life after death

for the lucky few.

Meanwhile there is purgatory, though only for the famous dead, and only as long as their fame lasts. This is Central European baroque, a continent apart from the democratic Heaven of *A Matter of Life and Death*. The generative idea was presumably to enact some kind of ironic meditation on the caprices of celebrity. The destination for these famous lost souls is an art-deco luxury hotel, where they are doomed to reside in a potential eternity of boredom unless the saturnine manager determines that their number is up. The problem, of course, is that this is an idea with a beginning but no end. Once the film star and his failed writer assassin have been ferried across the Stygian mists, they have – in more than one sense – nowhere to go. The rest is doodles, as the script stumbles from one inconsequential scene to the next and the camera wanders round the hotel and its grounds looking for something to focus on. The symbolic decoration is as arbitrary as the guest list. An empty swimming-pool provides the backdrop for one of the many rambling dialogues, and there are several statutory visits to a garden maze. Celebrity guests are wheeled on like participants in a manically disorganised chat show. Here is Einstein chalking formulae on a blackboard, there is Hemingway shooting clay pigeons; and the dog trotting round the lawn must be Lassie. Meanwhile, in another part of the forest, a pair of Baader-Meinhof terrorists periodically disrupt the cocktail hour, and a pop idol smashes his guitars (of which the hotel has a presumably limitless supply). A subplot featuring an amnesiac pop singer who imagines she is still alive is abandoned in mid-stream, and not even the hotel management bothers to explain why the guests are exclusively twentieth-century celebrities. The actors, left stranded in this mish-mash of disconnections, can only hope for oblivion.

David Wilson



... or hers (Marie Trintignant)

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Sight and Sound Spring 91.

Reviews

William Green
reviews every video
released this month

Highlights

Rental

Betsy's Wedding

Touchstone D310672
1990

Certificate PG Director Alan Alda
Saccharine matrimonial comedy
redeemed by a lively cast of wedding
guests (Joe Pesci, Madeline Kahn, Ally
Sheedy). The bride is Molly Ringwald
and Alan Alda plays the harrassed
father. (MFB No. 682)

Cadillac Man

20:20 Vision NVT12809
1990

Certificate 15 Director Roger Donaldson
Robin Williams at full throttle as a
car salesman-cum-ladies' man whose
silver tongue is put to the test when
jealous husband Tim Robbins comes
machine-gunning for revenge.
(MFB No. 681)

Captain America

20:20 Vision NVT12569
1989

Certificate PG Director Albert Pyun
Marvel Comics' most boring
superhero is brought out of his
retirement home (a block of ice in
the Artic) to defend democracy from
the menace of The Red Skull.
(MFB No. 684)

Creator

EV EVV1181
1985

Certificate 15 Director Ivan Passer
Mad geneticist Peter O'Toole tries to
recreate his dead wife from a test
tube, ignoring the charms of lab
assistant Mariel Hemingway. Young
scientists Vincent Spano and Virginia
Madsen take care of the sub-plot.
(MFB No. 678)

Crimes and Misdemeanors

MCEG Virgin VOR033
1989

Certificate 15 Director Woody Allen
The Woody Allen universe



Marital misery: Anjelica Huston

darkens as marital infidelities and
family betrayals lead to misery and
murder. Allen, Martin Landau,
Anjelica Huston, Jerry Orbach and
Mia Farrow lead a magnificent
ensemble cast. (MFB No. 679)

Daddy's Dyin' Who's Got the Will

Palace PVC2169R
1990

Certificate 15 Director Jack Fisk
Not much southern comfort in this
verbose adaptation of Del Shore's
successful stage play. Beau Bridges,
Beverly D'Angelo, Judge Reinhold and
Tess Harper quarrel under the
watchful eye of materfamilias Molly
McClure. (MFB No. 685)

Darkman

CIC VHA1467
1990

Certificate 18 Director Sam Raimi



The too-visible man: Liam Neeson

Disfigured burn victim Liam
Neeson develops synthetic skin
which liquefies in daylight, forcing
him to express his unstable feelings
about humanity under cover of
darkness. A brave, moody attempt
to cross *The Invisible Man* with *The
Phantom of the Opera*. (MFB No. 682)

The Freshman

20:20 Vision NVT11575
1990

Certificate PG Director Andrew
Bergman

Entertaining *Godfather* spoof
benefiting from the participation of
Marlon Brando. Rookie Matthew
Broderick shares the screen with a
Komodo dragon-lizard. (MFB No. 683)

Heart Condition

RCA/Columbia CVT11614
1990

Certificate 15 Director James D. Parriott
Bob Hoskins, a loud-mouthed LA vice
cop looking like an East End wide-
boy, solves his case thanks to the
transplanted heart and friendly
ghost of murder victim Denzel
Washington. (MFB No. 682)

Henry & June

CIC VHA1466
1990

Certificate 18 Director Philip Kaufman
The thinking person's sex movie,

featuring the literary lovemaking of
Henry Miller and Anaïs Nin. Fred
Ward, Uma Thurman, Richard E.
Grant and Maria de Medeiros enjoy
wild nights in Clichy. (MFB No. 684)

Kid

EV EVV1199
1990

Certificate 18 Director John Mark
Robinson

C. Thomas Howell checks into the
town of Whitebrush with a mission
to rid it of five bad guys who
murdered Mum and Dad. Revenge
Western with Pontiacs instead of the
Pony Express. (MFB No. 682)

Love Hurts

First Independent VA20123
1990

Certificate 15 Director Bud Yorkin
Bitter-sweet wedding cake, with the
emphasis on middle-age spread. John
Mahoney gets drunk, while divorced,
restless Jeff Daniels makes a play for
bridesmaid Judith Ivey. (MFB No. 683)

Metropolitan

Palace PVC2190R
1989

Certificate 15 Director Whit Stillman

Assured and sophisticated first
feature in which a coterie of
Manhattan socialite brats go to
dinner, fall in love at cross-purposes,
play truth games and talk at length
of Jane Austen. (MFB No. 683)

Mister Frost

CBS/Fox 2951
1990

Certificate 15 Director Philippe Setbon
Jeff Goldblum leads a mixed
company of English (Alan Bates) and
French (Jean-Pierre Cassel) actors by
the nose as a calmly satanic mass-
murderer. The director recently
scripted *Detective* for Jean-Luc Godard.
(MFB No. 683)

Presumed Innocent

Warner 12034
1990

Certificate 18 Director Alan J. Pakula
A smoothly twisted adaptation of
Scott Turow's torrid courthouse
bestseller. Family man Harrison Ford,
an attorney investigating the murder
of colleague and ex-mistress Greta
Scacchi, winds up becoming the
prime suspect. Bonnie Bedelia plays
the long-suffering wife. (MFB No. 682)

Repossessed

Guild 8628
1990

Certificate 15 Director Bob Logan
The title is the best joke in a lame
Exorcist parody. Grown-up Linda Blair

unwisely repeats her head-contorting role, while Leslie Nielsen frolics as a white-haired Father. (MFB No. 683)

RoboCop 2

MCEG Virgin VOR034

1990

Certificate 18 Director Irvin Kershner
Spot-welding the scrap-metal pieces left of Paul Verhoeven's lively original, Kershner bashes out a louder, nastier and much less humorous repeat performance for the tin-man law enforcer. (MFB No. 681)

A Shock to the System

Medusa MO318

1990

Certificate 15 Director Jan Egleson
Michael Caine, in lizard-eyed icy form, plays a passed-over middle manager whose talent for murder makes promotion a dead cert. An unusually black-hearted comedy. (MFB No. 683)

Where the Heart Is

Guild 8632

1990

Certificate 15 Director John Boorman
Boorman and his scriptwriter daughter Telsche create a fairy tale of New York, in which a group of Bright Young Things express themselves in the important areas of life (body-painting, high fashion, romance) while their long-suffering Daddy overcomes a cash-crisis in his demolition-construction business. (MFB No. 680)

Young Guns II

CBS/Fox 1902

1990

Certificate 15 Director Geoff Murphy
Brat-packer Emilio Estevez gets a second chance to play Billy the Kid, and still doesn't get killed. Sidekicks Kiefer Sutherland and Lou Diamond Phillips are retained, but the old-timer slot is now taken by James Coburn. (MFB No. 682)

Rental première

After the Shock

CIC VHB2493

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director/Producer/Screenplay Gary Sherman
Lead Actors Yaphet Kotto, Rue McClanahan, Jack Scalia 92 minutes
Gary Sherman's documentary-style film does its best to play up the destructive aftermath of the 1989

San Francisco earthquake.

Unfortunately, a couple of crushed vehicles and the odd teetering apartment block hardly make for high drama.

American Ninja 4:

The Annihilation

MGM/Pathé 54228

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Cedric Sundstrom
Producer Christopher Pearce
Screenplay David Gieves
Lead Actors Michael Dudikoff, James Booth, David Bradley 95 minutes
Martial-arts mastodons Michael Dudikoff (*Ninjas 1 and 2*) and David Bradley (*Ninja 3*) are in Africa for another showdown with the fanatical Ninjas. Some elementary international politics (nuclear device, rich, ambitious Arab sheik, billion-dollar ransom demand) are the background for the regular ballet of unarmed combat sequences.

Beyond the Stars

Braveworld BRV 10118

USA 1989

Certificate PG Director/Screenplay David Saperstun
Producer Joseph Perez
Lead Actors Christian Slater, Martin Sheen, Sharon Stone 87 minutes
Would-be astronaut Christian Slater hangs around NASA hoping to go to the moon. His ambitions are both reinforced and modified by his encounters with ex-spaceman Martin Sheen, who has contracted alcoholism and leukaemia. Good performances are spoiled in the last reel by lapses into sentimentality.

David

ITC 9451

USA 1988

Certificate 15 Director John Erman
Producer Donald March
Screenplay Stephanie Liss
Lead Actors Bernadette Peters, John Glover, Dan Lauria 95 minutes
A distraught mother recovers her kidnapped six-year-old child David (Matthew Lawrence) and discovers he is horribly disfigured from third-degree burns inflicted by his jealous and unstable father. The struggle for redress and the child's survival is depicted without too much recourse to grief-stricken hospital bedside scenes.

Desire and Hell at Sunset Motel

First Independent VA 20117

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director/Screenplay Alien Castle
Producer Donald P. Borchers
Lead Actors Sherilyn Fenn, Whip Hubley, David Hewlett, Paul Bartel 95 minutes
Sherilyn Fenn, star of *Two Moon Junction* and the TV series *Twin Peaks*,



On the tiles: Sherilyn Fenn in 'Desire and Hell at Sunset Motel'

is the centre of attention in this sly murder mystery. The ingredients are simple – a couple of stifling motel rooms, a bright blue swimming pool, the studied chic of 50s bathing costumes, and a plot involving three suspicious men and a married woman. Slow scenes, stilted dialogue, and the presence of a sweaty Paul Bartel as the peeping-tom motel owner lend the project an original, perverse atmosphere.

Face of Fear

Warner 12181

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Farhad Mann
Based on the novel by Dean R. Koontz
Lead Actors Lee Horsley, Kevin Conroy, Pam Dawber 89 minutes
Psychic pursues psycho in a killer-thriller interesting only for its unlikely central character. A fall has left mountaineer Graham Harris with a fear of heights and the power to 'see' the latest murders. Pursuit of the suspect results in his having to abseil down a forty-storey building.

Guns

RCA/Columbia CVT 12502

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director/Screenplay Andy Sidaris
Producer Arlene Sidaris
Lead Actors Erik Estrada, Dona Speir 92 minutes
Dona Speir joins five other Playboy Playmates in a routine sex comedy. Wading through an abundance of flesh, secret agent Erik Estrada is assisted by a female sidekick equipped with a rocket launcher.

The Howling VI: The Freaks

Palace PVC 2189

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Hope Perello
Producer Robert Pringle
Screenplay Kevin Rock
Based on the novels of Gary Brandner
Lead Actors Brendan Hughes, Bruce Payne, Michele Matheson 96 minutes
The original 1980 *The Howling* was a

werewolf with some pedigree. Five flops later, the bloodline has got pretty thin, and the inclusion of a Dracula in the circus-ring of the long-toothed and the undead does little to help. Ringmaster Bruce Payne exhibits some English reserve, but elsewhere, actorly excess goes quite unrestrained.

Let It Ride

CIC VHB2497

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Joe Pytko
Producer David Giler
Screenplay Ernest Morton
Based on the book *Good Vibes* by Jay Cronley
Lead Actors Richard Dreyfuss, David Johansen, Teri Garr, Robbie Coltrane 86 minutes
This racetrack fantasy canters around a familiar course as Richard Dreyfuss reneges on a promise to wife Teri Garr and runs off to bet on one last race after another. Robbie Coltrane appears as a roughneck bookie, and dollar bills fly about with inflationary abandon.

Lionheart

Warner 35203

USA 1987

Certificate PG Director Franklin J. Schaffner
Producers Stanley O'Toole, Talia Shire
Screenplay Menno Meyjes, Richard Outten
Lead Actors Eric Stoltz, Dexter Fletcher, Gabriel Byrne 100 minutes
Schaffner's earnest and lacklustre effort, set in the time of Richard the Lionheart, has a young knight (Eric Stoltz) questing across Europe as a kind of crossbreed of Robin Hood and the faithful Blondin.

Lisa

Warner 99728

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Gary Sherman
Producer Frank Yablans
Screenplay Gary Sherman, Karen Clark
Lead Actors Cheryl Ladd, Staci Keanan, D.W. Moffett 91 minutes
By the director of *After the Shock* ▶

◀ (see above). A serial murderer with a sense of romance (the 'Candle-light Killer') has his compulsion made easy by an adolescent girl (Staci Keanan) who rings up strange men to make advances on behalf of her lonely single mother. Some excellent characterisation comes from the relationship between the girl and her over-protective mother (Cheryl Ladd). However, the terror tactics of the climax are predictable.

Martial Law

EV EVV 1183

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director S.E. Cohen
Producer Kurt Anderson Screenplay Richard Brandes Lead Actors Cynthia Rothrock, Chad McQueen, David Carradine 84 minutes Original running time: 86 minutes
Chad McQueen, son of the late, great Steve, and Cynthia Rothrock, who will be remembered by martial arts fans as the kickboxing star of *China O'Brien*, team up as Los Angeles vice cops who eschew firearms, preferring to smash up their assailants using whirling hands and feet.

Me and Him

20:20 Vision NVT 12498

USA 1988

Certificate 15 Director Doris Dörrie
Producer Bernd Eichinger Screenplay Warren D. Leight Based on the novel by Alberto Moravia Lead Actors Griffin Dunne, Ellen Greene, Carey Lowell 90 minutes
Doris Dörrie, who wrote and directed the German comedy *Men* in 1985, here takes her ideas about the male competitive instinct to an absurdist extreme. She measures sensible Griffin Dunne against his own aggressive libido, in the form of his (talking) penis.

Montana

Warner 25008

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director William A. Graham Producer Roger Gimbel Screenplay Larry McMurtry Lead Actors Richard Crenna, Gena Rowlands, Lea Thompson 87 minutes
The farmers are under threat from the bad-guy developers, the US equivalent of the Coal Board, who want to rip up the cattle pasture and sink a few mine shafts. Although her family is tempted to sell up the old ranch, Gena Rowlands won't budge. Fine acting, but the pace is slow.

No Place Like Home

Odyssey ODY 193

USA 1989

Certificate PG Director Lee Grant
Producer Joseph Feury Screenplay Ara Watson, Sam Blackwell Lead Actors

Christine Lahti, Jeff Daniels 90 minutes

Life turns nasty for maintenance man Mike Cooper and his wife Zan when their home is destroyed by fire, forcing the couple onto the streets with their two small children and driving them to vagrancy and worse. Christine Lahti won a Golden Globe for her gritty, unsentimental performance in this true-life drama.

Red Blooded American Girl

20:20 Vision NVT 13263

Canada 1991

Certificate 18 Director David Blyth
Producer Nicolas Stiliadis Screenplay Allan Moyle Lead Actors Andrew Stevens, Heather Thomas, Christopher Plummer 89 minutes
With the entertaining *Death Warm'd Up* in 1985, David Blyth made a bid to become New Zealand's answer to David Cronenberg. In a gleaming private medical clinic, Christopher Plummer works to find a cure for the vampire-virus that drives him and his patients to drink Bloody Marys straight from the transfusion table. When his girlfriend picks up the infection, young maverick drug-designer Andrew Stevens joins the lab team. A stylish horror movie.

The Room of Words

Braveworld BRV 10112

Italy 1989

Certificate 18 Director Joe D'Amato
Screenplay Based on the novel by F. Mole Lead Actors Martine Brochard, Linda Carol, David Brandon 97 minutes
Another dip into the Paris diaries of Anaïs Nin (see *Henry & June* above), worked up into a conventional, period erotic art movie.

Street Hunter

Capital CHV 1002

USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director John A. Gallagher
Producer David Gil Screenplay John A. Gallagher and Steve James Lead Actors Steve James, Reb Brown, John Leguizamo 90 minutes
A black modern-day bounty hunter rides around in a van packed with electronic gadgets and deadly weapons, stalking the mean streets in the company of a trusty Doberman. In deference to tradition, Steve James wears a Spaghetti Western hat and long duster coat.

True Betrayal

ITC 8031

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Roger Young
Screenplay Alan Sharp Lead Actors Mare Winningham, M. Emmet Walsh, Peter Gallagher 93 minutes
The beautiful detective falling for the

disarmingly handsome suspect is such a cliché that it comes as surprise to find that this actually did happen in Houston, when female private eye Kim Paris was called in to work on a murder investigation. The true story is moulded into conventional thriller shape.

Retail

Assault and Matrimony

Braveworld STV 2023

USA 1987 Price £5.99

Certificate 15 Director James Frawley
Teleplay James Binder Based on the book by James Anderson Lead Actors Jill Eikenberry, Michael Tucker 90 minutes
Second-string cover version of *The War of the Roses*, as a cute couple attempt to assassinate one another with an array of domestic appliances.

Blue Cat Blues

Warner PES 54263

USA Price £8.99

Certificate U 54 minutes
Eight classic *Tom and Jerry* cartoons from the Hanna-Barbera team, including *A-Tominable Snowman*, *Calypso Cat* and *Barbecue Brawl*.

Caprice

CBS/Fox 1881

USA 1966 Price £9.99

Certificate U Director Frank Tashlin
Late Tashlin spy comedy (his penultimate film) which dashes about at the usual frenzied pace. Richard Harris and Doris Day do most of the running. (MFB No. 401)

Carnival of Souls

Palace PH 9011X

USA 1962 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Herk Harvey
Low-budget twilight-zone fantasy.

touted as one of the most influential cult films of the 1960s, which is extraordinary when one considers that it has been practically impossible to see for two decades. Candace Hilligoss seems to drown in a car accident, but then reappears. She finds a world turned very strange. (MFB Nos. 399, 680)

C.H.U.D. II: Bud the Chud

First Fright VA 30130

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director David Irving
Lead Actors Brian Robbins, Bill Calvert, Tricia Leigh Fisher 84 minutes
The horror-movie answer to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, the CHUDS (Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dwellers) undergo sewer-level radioactive mutation, but refuse to be Nice Kids. Bud claims to be the prettiest of the gang.

Clara's Heart

Warner PES 11823

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Robert Mulligan
In middle-class Baltimore, Jamaican housekeeper Whoopi Goldberg is a better parent to a troubled little boy than his feuding, self-absorbed mother and father. With Michael Ontkean and Kathleen Quinlan. (MFB No. 665)

Class of 1999

First Fright VA 30132

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Mark L. Lester
Lead Actors Bradley Gregg, Tracey Lin, Stacy Keach, Malcolm McDowell 92 minutes
Entertaining update of *Class of 1984*, which was a modern high-school version of *The Blackboard Jungle*. The classroom delinquency is so bad that the teaching staff is made up of humanoid robots programmed for one of two activities – teaching or discipline. Only a matter of time before they run amok.



'Carnival of Souls': no rest for the wicked

Comedy Classics

Palace, 10 tapes

Certificate U Price £9.99 each

Stan Laurel

Palace PVC 4019a

USA

54 minutes

Six silent-comedy shorts made by Laurel before he teamed up with Oliver Hardy in 1926. *Oranges and Lemons, Pick and Shovel, Sleuth, Soilers, Just Rambling Along, Near Dublin.*

Laurel and Hardy

Palace PVC 4020a

USA

46 minutes

Two Oliver Hardy solo shorts – *Kid Speed, Stick Around*, and one Stan Laurel short – *Smitty*.

Buster Keaton

Palace PVC 4018a

USA

57 minutes

Three classic Buster Keaton silent shorts – *Balloonatic, The Blacksmith and Coney Island*.

Buster Keaton and Others

Palace PVC 4021a

USA

52 minutes

Buster Keaton in the frenetic *Cops*, Harry Langdon in *All Night Long* and Harold Lloyd in *Cinema Director*.

Ford Sterling

Palace PVC 4022a

USA

58 minutes

Sterling is best remembered as Chief Teheezal of the Keystone Cops. Shorts here are *A Bedroom Blunder, Our Daredevil Chief, A Desperate Scoundrel*.

Ben Turpin and Others

Palace PVC 4023a

USA

48 minutes

Cross-eyed Ben Turpin in *A Clever Dummy*; Bobby Vernon in a period 'girl-on-a-railroad-track' farce – *Teddy at the Throttle*; giant Mack Swain on a motorcycle in *Love, Speed and Thrills*.

Charlie Chaplin

Palace PVC 4107a

USA

50 minutes

The Cure, Behind the Screen, Caught in a Cabaret

Charlie Chaplin

Palace PVC 4014a

USA

53 minutes

Shanghaied, The Adventurer, The Count

Charlie Chaplin

Palace PVC 4015a

USA

46 minutes

The Pawnshop, The Rink, One AM

Charlie Chaplin

Palace PVC 4012a

USA

50 minutes

The Champion, Mabel at the Wheel, Police

Dead Calm

Warner PES 11870

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Phillip Noyce
Taut ocean-going thriller with Nicole Kidman in peril on the high seas when husband Sam Neill rows over to an abandoned schooner, and Billy Zane takes over the family yacht. (MFB No. 670)

Erik the Viking

CBS/Fox 2201

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Terry Jones
Tim Robbins, Mickey Rooney, Eartha Kitt, John Cleese, Anthony Sher, Tim McInerney, all adorned with cows' horns on their heads and bearing names like Sven the Berserk, raise few laughs. (MFB No. 669)

Graffiti Bridge

Warner PES 12055

USA 1990 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director/Screenplay/Music Prince
Producers Arnold Stiefel, Randy Phillips Lead Actors Prince, Morris Day, Jerome Benton, Jill Jones
87 minutes

Five years on from *Purple Rain*, The Kid (alias Prince) is still locked in personal and musical combat with rival Morris Day. This time, the prizes are a night-club called Glam-Slam and a dream-girl called Aura (Ingrid Chavez). Brash souvenir video to match a fine rock album.

Henry V

RCA/Columbia CVR22761

United Kingdom 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate PG

Director Kenneth Branagh
Branagh does his ruddy-cheeked King Hal, wading through the mud to slaughter the French at Agincourt. A peculiar attempt to make an anti-war statement out of Shakespeare's jingoistic play. (MFB No. 669)

Johnny Dangerously

CBS/Fox 1456

USA 1984 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Amy Heckerling
Before she went into the disposable nappy business with the *Look Who's Talking* films, Amy Heckerling made this 30s gangster-movie parody. Tyro actors Michael Keaton and Griffin Dunne practise their moves on a hit-or-miss basis. (MFB No. 617)



Hat people: 'Johnny Dangerously'

The Lair of the White Worm

First Fright VA 30131

United Kingdom 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Ken Russell
Horror film set in the Peak District featuring snake-monster Amanda Donohoe, who fails to find anything interesting (Hugh Grant, Sammi Davis) to devour. (MFB No. 663)

Rawhead Rex

First Fright VA 30129

USA 1986 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director George Pavlou
Producers Kevin Attew, Don Hawkins
Screenplay Clive Barker Lead Actors David Dukes, Kelly Piper 86 minutes
Country-bumpkin addition to the Vengeful-Demons-on-the-Other-Side tales that obsess Clive Barker. This unreleased film, set in rural Ireland, now looks like a dress rehearsal for the more sophisticated Cenobite ceremonies of the *Hellraiser* horror flicks.

Santa Sangre

Palace PVC 4102

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Alejandro Jodorowsky
Tattooed ladies, religious fanatics and mad knife murderers form part of the allegorical freak show with which art-house director Jodorowsky surrounds his beleaguered hero. (MFB No. 675)

Silver Streak

CBS/Fox 1080

USA 1976 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Arthur Hiller
A train crashes into the station booking hall in this would-be madcap comedy thriller. Gene Wilder, Jill Clayburgh and Richard Pryor caper up and down the carriage corridors. (MFB No. 519)

Slaughter High

First Fright VA 30128

USA 1985 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Directors/Screenplay George Dugdale, Mark Ezra, Peter Litten Lead Actors Caroline Munro, Simon Scuddamore 86 minutes
Original running time: 87 minutes
Witless high-school reunion screamer made for the US drive-in

second-feature circuit, and timed for an April Fool's Day release.

Spontaneous Combustion

Braveworld STV 2024

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director Tobe Hooper Producer Jim Rogers
Screenplay Tobe Hooper, Howard Goldberg Lead Actors Brad Dourif, Cynthia Bain, Jon Cypher 93 minutes
The director of *Poltergeist* and two *Chain Saw Massacres* subjects guinea-pig Brad Dourif to a terrifying range of special-effects thunderbolts, fireballs and localised holocausts.

The Terrorists

Braveworld STV 2015

USA 1987 Price £5.99

Certificate not yet issued
Director John Herzfeld Producer Hans Proppe Teleplay Mel Frohman Lead Actors Brian Dennehy, Joanna Cassidy 96 minutes
With his daughter kidnapped by ruthless German terrorists, all-American Brian Dennehy doesn't trust the local authorities to deal with the crisis. European gun-licensing regulations are among the many laws he seems willing to flout in his pursuit of justice.

V

Warner, 4 tapes: PES 01489, 11489, 11490, 11491

USA 1983-84 Price £9.99 each

Certificate 15 Directors Kenneth Johnson (Parts 1 and 2); Richard T. Heffron (The Final Battle 1, 2 and 3)
Lead Actors Jane Badler, Michael Durrell, Robert Englund, Faye Grant, Richard Hard, Thomas Hill 192 minutes (Parts 1 and 2); 87, 89 and 82 minutes (The Final Battle 1, 2 and 3)
Aliens take over Los Angeles, and then the world, in a conventional Reptile-Nazis-from-Outerspace story. The serial format and 'us versus them' plot build up plenty of suspense. The four tapes comprise the original five TV episodes. (A further twenty-two-programme series was made later.)

Vampire in Venice

First Fright VA30133

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director/Screenplay Augusto Caminito Lead Actors Klaus Kinski, Barbara de Rossi, Yorgo Voyagis, Donald Pleasence, Christopher Plummer 89 minutes
Christopher Plummer has graduated from Dracula doctor (see *Red Blooded American Girl* above) to the scholarly rank of Professor of Vampirism. In a Venetian palace he meets his perfect subject, Nosferatu. Klaus Kinski's hair has regrown since he played the same role for Werner Herzog in 1979.

Alex Potemkin counsels, warns and brainteases his admiring readers

All's Welles that ends Welles

As you all know, the first public screening of *Citizen Kane* was held on 8 May 1941. I was hoping to mark the fiftieth anniversary of this pivotal moment in the history of film by publishing a short 25,000 word extract from the manuscript of my work in progress, *Tummy Trouble: Indigestion and the Oeuvre of Orson Welles*.

Unhappily, I have been informed that stomastic scholarship on this scale no longer has a place in the new, aerobic, slimline *Sight and Sound*. Interested readers, however, may obtain a mimeographed copy of my first three chapters by application to the Fitzrovia Film Foundation (please enclose a cheque or postal order for £1.37 to cover p&p).

At the Fitzrovia we will be celebrating the anniversary in grand style. Most subscribers to *Sight and Sound* have, of course, pursued correspondence courses at one time or another with the extra-mural department of the Foundation (older alumni will remember the ever-popular *Twin Souls: Carl Theodor Dreyer and Deanna Durbin*).

In common with all our other students, present and past, they will shortly be receiving invitations to the Grand Cinematograph Ball, which will

be held on 31 June at the newly restored Odeon Regal Cinema next door to the Foundation's offices. We are hoping that our President and Benefactor, Charles Foster Kane Jr (nephew of the famous publisher), will fly in for this glittering occasion.

Highlight of the evening will be a screening of clips from some of the wonderful films with which Orson Welles was associated as a cameo actor – Michael Winner's *I'll Never Forget What's 'is Name*, Brian De Palma's *Get To Know Your Rabbit*, Matt Cimber's *Butterfly* (with Pia Zadora) and James Frawley's masterful *The Muppet Movie*. I am also working frantically to assemble a showreel of the great man's TV commercials – from Harvey's Bristol Cream to Paul Masson wine.

Despite this absorbing and rewarding task, I have found some time to deal with the backlog of all your letters and enquiries. Most of you have written simply to share your sense of excitement and anticipation about the forthcoming cinema rerelease of Renoir's *La Bête humaine* and Carne's *Quai des brumes*. Sadly, I have had to cancel our planned coach trip to visit Jean Gabin's grave at Père Lachaise, near his beloved Menilmontant. The

Paris cemetery authorities have advised me that their summer schedules have been booked solid by the devotees of a dead poet called Jim Morrison, who is also buried there.

Still on a French theme, I am very happy to report an excellent response to our Robert Bresson competition. Contestants, you will recall, had to name all his films in which a character was seen to be smiling. The answer, of course, was none – but Mr E. Canford-Dumas of Potters Bar won the prize (a copy of the director's autobiography *Ce n'est vraiment pas drôle, la vie*) for pointing out that the Hee-Haw of the donkey in the last reel of *Au Hasard, Balthazar* could be plausibly interpreted as a laugh.

Finally, Ms Grace Jackson writes to warn fellow film buffs not to buy mail-order videocassettes of *Bringing Up Baby* as advertised in *Slash and Grab Magazine*. Instead of the witty Katharine Hepburn/Cary Grant comic capers she expected, the postman delivered a film involving infant cannibalism. Ms Jackson would appreciate advice about the wisdom of ordering *Adam's Rib* from the same source.

Professor Potemkin is a Senior Lecturer in Cinema Studies at the FFI.

Professor Potemkin's Competition 1

Absent friends

Keen readers of *The BFI Newsletter* may have learned of a grave new problem facing the overworked staff at the National Film Archive. Deep in the storage vaults, a bizarre celluloid virus is spreading through the repository shelves, afflicting the master prints of some of our most valuable classic films with a degenerative condition popularly known as 'face fatigue'. A typical example is displayed left. To help the Archive's crack team of restorers, you are invited to identify the actors whose features have so unfortunately faded from view. I am confident that dozens of you film buffs will be able to recognise the missing mugs, so as a tie-breaker please submit a single line of dialogue appropriate to the scene. The most amusing correct entry will win a videocassette of Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* (published by Connoisseur Video in association with the BFI, normal price £14.99). If you are under 18, I will find you a copy of *The Wizard of Oz*, and if you don't like it, you'll get *Gazza's Soccer School*. Entries by postcard or fax to Professor Potemkin, Competition 1, *Sight and Sound*, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Fax: 071-436 2327.



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